

Hafa Adai!

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Wutip spares the Marianas

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

Super Typhoon Wutip, which passed just south of the Marianas over the weekend, barely clipped Guam and did not cause any damage in the CNMI.

According to a press release from the CNMI Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, Super Typhoon Wutip continues to move further away from

the Marianas.

As of 2pm yesterday, there were no reports of injuries or damage on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

See WUTIP on Page 4

Lawmen uncover alleged meth dispensary

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety's Drug Enforcement Task Force uncovered a crystal meth dispensary in Chinatown over the weekend where they seized nearly \$9,000 worth of methamphetamine

See LAW MEN on Page 4

Kilili upbeat over chances of NMI immigration bills

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is hoping to weave the same magic that he did in the 115th U.S. Congress, where he managed to help pass two legislation about labor and immigration in the CNMI in a Republican-

controlled House of Representatives.

H.R. 339 is now Public Law 115-53; H.R. 5956 became P.L. 115-218.

"I can say that, despite the difficulty, I was able to get two immigration bills passed under the administration of President Donald Trump. So,

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INSIDE



BUSINESS

A Walmart greeter with cerebral palsy met with store management in a bid to keep his job.

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FOCUS

Not much is known about the new Abu Sayyaf leader but the attacks attributed to him are savage.

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LIFE & STYLE

It is decidedly casual inside the Dolby Theatre the day before the Oscars.

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Local

Arts fest preps begin

Preparations for the 38th Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival has begun and surprises are to be expected this year.

The Flame Tree Arts Committee came together last Friday for their first meeting to kick off preparations of the most highly anticipated arts festival on Saipan.

According to Commonwealth Arts Council executive director Parker Yobei, there will be some surprises this year and one of them will be the featured performances.

Yobei said that the Arts Council will be working with the Marianas Visitors Authority to bring in off-island performers from Korea, Japan, and China.

The event is scheduled for April 11-14 and will include games and educational workshops. The 38th Annual Flame Tree Arts Festival will also feature 64 local artists.

The registration for participating artists and vendors starts on Feb. 25 and will end on March 30.

Yobei said there would be 24 canopies for food vendors and 64 canopies for artists and artisans.

For more information about artist registration, call Faye McMahon at 322-9982/83. For vendor registration, call Erica Trinidad at 322-9982/83. For interested talents who wish to perform at the festival, contact Gordon Mariano at 287-1195. (*Kimberly A. Bautista*)

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NMC board to talk about resuming presidential search

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

With Super Typhoon Yutu interrupting its search for a new president, the North-

ern Marianas College Board of Regents will be talking about possibly resuming its presidential search, as repairs and the continuation of classes take priority after

Yutu nearly destroyed its As Terlaje campus.

NMC Board of Regents chair Charles Cepeda told *Saipan Tribune* that the board is looking forward to discuss-

ing the continuation of their presidential search now that classes have moved back at their As Terlaje campus last Wednesday.

"We haven't put the presi-

dential search committee together because our main focus was recovery from the typhoon and where we are going to go after the typhoon hit," Cepeda said in an interview.

Frankie Eliptico, NMC dean of Institutional Advancement, is currently the interim president of the CNMI's lone community college.

"We are not in the position right now to set up the presidential search," Cepeda said last Wednesday. He did say, however, that the Board of Regents is slated to meet this Thursday at their As Terlaje campus and the presidential search would be one of their topics for discussion.

"[Eliptico] was the one who helped bring up the temporary classrooms as being provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but we wanted him to be able to bring the students back to campus first before we look for a more permanent president," Cepeda said.

Rotary Club welcomes Holl

The Rotary Club of Saipan welcomed a new member into its ranks last Tuesday during its meeting at the Hyatt Regency Club Saipan.

Saipan Rotary Club president Greg Borja and president-elect Marcia Ayuyu inducted Irene N. Holl of Bridge Capital LLC as the club's new member.

"You are beginning a great

adventure in leadership, friendship, service to your community, and to your fellow man. You have been invited to membership and the Saipan Rotary Club accepted you as a person of good character, high ethical standard, a person who has the heart for service and...as a leader in the community," Borja told Holl during her induction.

Ayuyu sponsored Holl into the club.

"You have been invited to join the Rotary Club but it will be through your actions that you will become a Rotarian," Borja said. "You will be provided many opportunities through our Rotary Club and district to enhance and expand your professional and personal skills, and these opportunities can provide great value to you."

Holl was reportedly with the



Rotary Club of Saipan president-elect Marcia Ayuyu, center, affixes the club pin on new member Irene N. Holl, left, while Rotary president Greg Borja addresses club members.

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Rotary Club of Saipan back in 2008 before leaving when she went off-island.

"It was a good three years," she said. "I have been a Rotarian for the most of my life."

In Cebu, Philippines, where she hails from, Holl was a member of the Rotaract before moving to Saipan.

"I was the first outstanding new Rotarian when I joined [in 2008]," she said. "I have been advocating for guest workers and was given the chance to speak once here in the Saipan Rotary Club," she said. (Erwin Encinaires)



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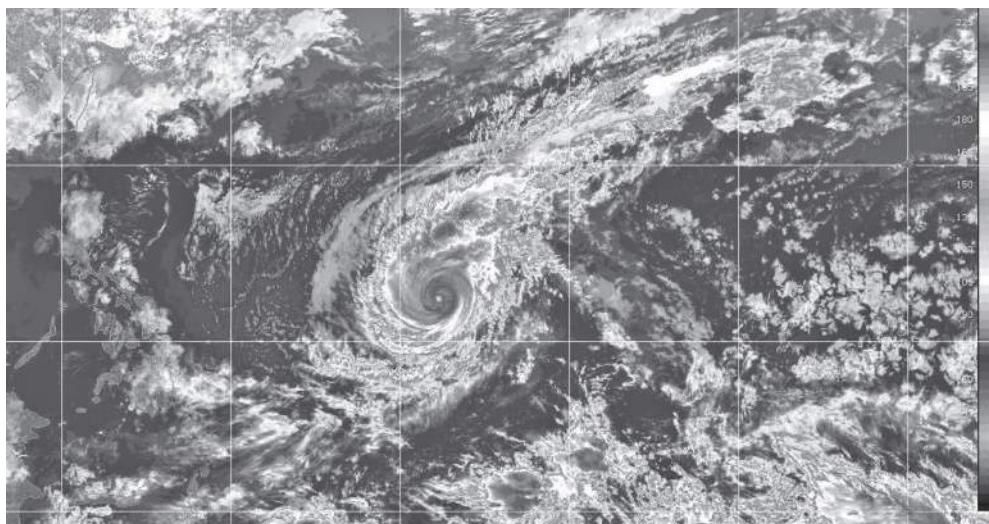
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WUTIP

From Page 1

"There were no reports of injuries as a direct result of Wutip...Public roadways remain clear of debris," it added.

At its peak early Sunday morning, Wutip became a super typhoon, with maximum sustained winds of 155 miles per hour (249.5 kilometers per hour).

It is expected to continue to the northwest through Monday morning before turning to the north-northwest and north. Super Typhoon Wutip will continue to slow down

in forward motion through Monday morning and the slow motion will persist through Wednesday.

There were a total of 83 individuals who took shelter during the passing of Wutip on Saipan Tinian, and Rota. There were 81 shelterees on Saipan, two on Rota, and none on Tinian.

Government operations and schools, as well as non-commercial flights, are expected to resume today as scheduled.

Arctic Airlines will also be resuming operations on Monday but all other commercial flights have been cancelled until further notice.

Tropical storm watches and

warnings have been cancelled for the Marianas as of 5pm yesterday but winds and seas will remain hazardous through Tuesday night.

Acting governor Arnold Palacios commends all the hardworking government employees who worked tirelessly to ensure the CNMI's safety during the storm.

"I want to especially recognize the National Weather Service out of Guam, our partners from Guam, the CNMI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Mayor David M. Apatang and his great staff at the Mayor's Office, our [temporary tent

in China Town. Water service will be affected in Gualo Rai and As Falipe in that period.

Also, tomorrow, from 8am to 4pm, four wooden power poles will be replaced in Garapan. There will be a power interruption on Beach Road, Garapan, but water service will not be affected.

On Wednesday, from 8am to 1pm, three wooden power poles will be replaced in China Town. This will affect power on Sugar King Road in China Town. Water service will not be affected.

On Friday, from 8am to 4pm, nine wooden power poles will be replaced in Dandan. This will affect the power

gins on Oct. 1, and three more times up to fiscal year 2023. Fiscal years 2024 to 2029 will have a reduction of 1,000 each and by 2030 the numerical cap is 1,000.

This time, Sablan introduced H.R. 559 or the NMI Long-Term Legal Residents Relief Act that would grant seven groups of foreign nationals under the parole program CNMI-only status, while H.R. 560 or the NMI Residents Relief Act would give long-term guest workers improved status.

Sablan, as vice chairman of Insular Affairs under the House Natural Resources Committee, left Saipan last week to prepare for a scheduled committee hearing on Feb. 27.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, as well as representatives of federal agencies connected with labor and immigration have been invited to testify at the committee hearing.

Sablan said the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Labor have declined to attend the hearing.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office—which is the auditing, evaluation, and investigative services arm of the U.S. Congress—was also invited to testify.

"There might be somebody from DHS, DoL, and USCIS in the room and would observe. Or they would watch it on [cable channel] C-SPAN. I'm not sure if GAO accepted the invitation but they asked for copies of the bill [H.R. 559]," said Sablan.

The hearing is in connection with the legislative fix that USCIS has suggested that must be done after director L. Francis Cissna terminated the CNMI parole program in December. USCIS gave a 180-day window, which ends on June 29, in order for a legislative fix for the affected

individuals.

Guam declared clear of danger from powerful Pacific typhoon

HAGATNA, GUAM (AP)—Authorities have declared Guam clear of the danger of a powerful typhoon in the Pacific Ocean.

Acting Gov. Joshua Tenorio says the U.S. territory will in the coming days assess the damage caused by winds from Typhoon Wutip.

People didn't wait for the government's announcement to leave their homes on Sunday. Restaurants in the towns of Tamuning and Tumon were

packed with people, Catholic Masses went on, and the shopping centers were full of early morning shoppers.

Wutip moved northwest,

away from Guam. The weather service said the storm could intensify to a category 5 typhoon before it begins to weaken late Sunday.

LAWMEN

From Page 1

Chinatown, and seized 12.8 gross-grams of methamphetamine that had a value of about \$8,960.

Two Chinese men were arrested at the scene.

Ruijun Huang, 46, and Zhao Xin Zhu, 40, have been charged with possession of a controlled substance and trafficking of a controlled substance.

Last Friday, Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho imposed a bail of \$100,000 on both men.

Huang is set for a preliminary hearing on Feb. 28 at 1:30 before associate judge Kenneth Govendo.

Huang's arraignment is scheduled for March 4 at 9am before Presiding Judge Roberto Naraja.

According to court documents, Huang, better known as "Brother," was reportedly actively distributing "ice"

to customers on Saipan and is known to be one of the main sources of methamphetamine. Zhu is reportedly the deliveryman of the controlled substance.

A cooperating defendant assisted law enforcement in conducting a monitored and recorded purchase from Huang.

On Feb. 21 at 9:40am, task force personnel met with the cooperating defendant to prepare for the operation to buy meth from Huang.

At around 9:53am, DETF

officers monitored a phone conversation between the cooperating defendant and Huang, where they agreed to meet up at an abandoned car wash area in Garapan. DETF officers handed \$1,400 to the cooperating defendant to purchase 2 grams of meth from Huang.

DETF surveillance teams then established a perimeter on and around the abandoned car wash area and equipped the cooperating defendant with an audio transmitting and recording device to be used in the transaction.

At about 10:13am, DETF officers observed a green Toyota Corolla park along the street directly south of the abandoned car wash. The man who exited the car was described as a tall and skinny Asian male dressed in black and was identified later as Huang.

Huang was then seen entering the cooperating defendant car where the transaction was made.

Later, DETF officers met with the cooperating defendant and got from him a small clear plastic baggie that contained a crystalline substance, the recording device, and the \$300 that was unused.

The crystalline substance later tested positive for the presence of methamphetamine.

The DETF surveillance teams then followed Huang's vehicle to a compound in Chinatown where he and Zhu were arrested.

to the U.S. via the H-2B visa program.

"I want to give governor Torres and governor Leon Guerrero the chance and hear what they think. Governor Torres has already sent me a letter and I met with him here [last] Monday (Feb. 18). It is important in this hearing that we need to look at the different options that we have. We just came from a historic 35-day shutdown over an immigration issue; it is easier to reopen the government than to agree on immigration bills."

"[USCIS] offered its drafting assistance. My question is, do I have the political support of DHS? And I have not been able to get that yet. We're having a hearing anyway. ... Included in the hearing is the review of H2-B workers and the bar on Philippine citizens. That is another complicated issue that includes Guam, with Gov. Leon Guerrero also testifying."

POLES

From Page 1

that was affected by Super Typhoon Yutu last October.

Due to the scale of work, Camacho advised motorists to take alternate routes or to exercise caution when driving through the working areas.

Tomorrow, Tuesday, from 8am to 1pm, three wooden power poles will be replaced in China Town and Gualo Rai, causing a power outage along Commonwealth Drive

along Airport Road in Dandan. Water service will not be affected.

On Saturday, from 8am to 4pm, nine wooden power poles will be replaced in Dandan. This will affect power along Airport Road in Dandan. Water service will not be affected.

Finally, on Monday, March 4, from 8am to 1pm, four wooden power poles will be replaced in Dandan. This will affect power along Airport Road in Dandan. Water service will not be affected.

On Feb. 21 at 9:40am, task force personnel met with the cooperating defendant to prepare for the operation to buy meth from Huang.

At around 9:53am, DETF

individuals.

Sablan said H.R. 559—if it becomes law—would help solve the problem of spouses and immediate relatives of citizens of Freely Associated States and spouses or IRs of U.S. citizens; parents of U.S. citizen children who are under and over 21 years old; CNMI permanent residents, stateless individuals, and E-2C CNMI-only investors.

"[President] Trump issued a directive last year. DHS reviewed the categorical parole for the CNMI and decided that it falls within the directive of the president, that's why they discontinued the program that I was able to get under the administration of [former] President [Barack] Obama," Sablan said.

"They [individuals under the parole program] can't stay here no later than June 30. So, there's some sense of urgency to this. They are not a big group, but it is more fo-

revered assistance to draft the legislation. "It would give us ideas [drafting assistance] on what's in their [USCIS] minds. Their drafting assistance only covers five groups and does not include CW workers."

"The bill that USCIS drafted did not include CW workers since their reasoning is there's still time to do legislation for CW workers. While I don't disagree with that, without the political support of a bill [H.R. 560] such as this from DHS, chances of it becoming a law is very little," said Sablan.

Sablan said the hearing is also in connection with the H-2B visa problem that the CNMI and Guam is currently experiencing. DHS removed last month the Philippines, Dominican Republic, and Ethiopia from the list of eligible countries whose workers are eligible to be petitioned

KILILI

From Page 1

there's a possibility [of bills passing]. We just need to have a lot of work and cooperation," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune*.

P.L. 115-53 or the Northern Mariana Islands Economic Expansion Act revised the CNMI-Only transitional worker visa numerical cap by adding 2,002 while also increasing the vocational educational fees—which is paid by a local employer for every transitional worker it hires—from \$150 to \$200 and barring construction occupation permits from the CW-1 program.

P.L. 115-218 or the Northern Mariana Islands U.S. Workforce Act of 2018 extended the CW-1 program up to 2029 and set a numerical cap of 13,000 for fiscal year 2019. The cap would be slashed by 500 in fiscal year 2020, which be-

New law establishes product seal to indicate genuine CNMI product

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has signed into law a House bill that establishes the CNMI product seal.

House Bill 20-86, introduced by Rep. Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) and co-authored by now House Speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) in the previous Legislature, is now Public Law 20-89.

Wrongful death suit is filed over drowning at the Grotto dive site

A wrongful death lawsuit was filed last week before the Superior Court over the death of a 62-year-old Chinese woman who drowned when she was about to scuba dive but fell into the water while crossing large rocks at the Grotto dive site in Marpi last May.

Wu Yang and Linyu Zhang, as personal representatives of the deceased, Zhao Xia Yang, are suing Summer Nana Corp., Ocean Free Corp., and Wave Dive Trip.

Wu Yang and Zhang, who are in China, are the daughter and mother of the deceased, respectively.

Summer Nana and Ocean Free are corporations in the CNMI. Wave Dive Trip is a company organized in Hong Kong.

Wu Yang and Zhang, through counsel Colin M. Thompson, are also suing 50 unnamed co-defendants.

The plaintiffs asked the court to hold the defendants liable for negligence. They are demanding unspecified damages and a jury trial.

According to the complaint, Zhao Xia Yang went to the Grotto on a guided scuba diving tour on May 6, 2018.

The Grotto is a dive site that consists of a pool of water at the base of a long flight of stairs, and has three underwater openings that lead out to the open ocean.

At the time of the tour, Thompson said, the Grotto was dangerous because the weather was windy and the water turbulent.

The lawyer said despite the turbulent sea and adverse conditions, and despite the inexperience of Yang, the group of tourists, led by Summer Nana and Ocean Free, descended toward the Grotto pool.

He said a tour guide working for Summer Nana and Ocean Free instructed Yang and the other tourists to enter the Grotto pool by crossing slippery and uneven large rocks.

Following the instructions of the tour guide, Yang alleg-

H.B. 20-86 would promote local products internationally and, at the same time, seeks to improve the tourism industry and enhance the Commonwealth's export potential.

The legislation seeks to end the proliferation of products made by foreigners that are currently on the market that pose as goods that came or that

were produced in the CNMI.

"As a result, the CNMI's identity is being stolen and profited from. Many consumers are duped into believing that these products are genuine CNMI made item/s when they are not. The reality is that while these items are made elsewhere, the CNMI name is used on packaging materials

to make the item appear genuine," states P.L. 20-89.

The new law would protect the integrity of the CNMI and the value of its products through marketing distinction. It would also help genuine products from the Commonwealth compete with those that are similar but made elsewhere.

P.L. 20-89 aims to also give incentives to new entrepreneurs that produce locally-made goods that would proudly show the CNMI Product Seal to help the Commonwealth products get distinguished from the rest.

"Therefore, the Legislature is taking a proactive approach

to protect the CNMI's identity, encourage new entrepreneurs to produce locally made products and, at the same time, promote consumption and exportation of locally made products," added P.L. 20-89.

The CNMI Department of Commerce will administer the provisions of the CNMI Product Seal Act of 2017 and shall promulgate the rules and regulations no later than 90 days after the enactment of P.L. 20-89, which would also establish a CNMI Product Seal Fund.

"[The CNMI Product Seal Fund], which shall be maintained separate and apart from any other funds of the government of the

CNMI. Independent records and accounts shall be maintained in connection therewith."

"Funds of the CNMI Product Seal Fund shall be used exclusively for the administration and operations of the CNMI Product Seal program. All funds collected from fees, charges, or fines levied pursuant to this Act shall be deposited into the CNMI Product Seal Fund."

The local Commerce department shall develop the design for the CNMI Product Seal that would give products from the islands of Rota, Tinian, Saipan, and the Northern Islands a distinct image or one product seal for the entire CNMI. (Jon Perez)

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WUTIP BRIEFS

MITT SEIS meetings postponed

Due to the effects of Super Typhoon Wutip, Joint Region Marianas and Navy officials will postpone public meetings to discuss the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement that

were planned for Feb. 26-27, in Guam and Saipan.

United anticipates flight cancellations

Due to inclement weather from Typhoon Wutip, United Airlines was expecting schedule changes for flights to and from A. B. Won Pat International Airport last Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019. (PR)

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Fishery scholarship applications due March 1

The Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and its Education Committee members has set a deadline

of March 1 to apply for up to three undergraduate or graduate scholarships for the 2019-2020 academic year.

These scholarships support the aspiration of American Samoa, Guam and the CNMI to build their capacity to manage

their fisheries and related resources through employment of their own people.

These scholarships cover

the cost of tuition and fees and some living expenses. However, for undergraduates, there is an expectation that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid will be completed early and Pell grants obtained so the

relevant university's Financial Aid Office can determine the amount of aid needed. Funding for the scholarships comes in part from the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office and Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center.

For further details, contact Sylvia Spalding at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or phone (808) 522-8220. (PR)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SILC focus group meetings on Rota, Tinian

The Statewide Independent Living Council will hold separate focus group meeting on Feb. 27, 2019, at 6pm at the Rota Youth Center and Tinian Public Library to solicit public input for the new 3-year State Plan for Independent Living. For more information call 322-6537/8. (PR)

MIFICPA to host tax seminar

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants,

or MIFICPA, invites the public to this year's tax seminar on March 2, 2019, from 8am to 12pm, at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. This year's seminar will focus on tax updates for 2018/2019, changes in tax laws and tax filing requirements, among others.

The seminar will be conducted by David J. Burger, CPA, the managing partner of Burger, Comer & Magliari.

The registration fee for members is \$25, inclusive of membership fee, snacks and certificate of attendance.

Non-members and non-accountants are also welcome for the same fee. Registration starts at 7:30am.

To facilitate the question-and-answer portion of the seminar, you can pre-register and turn in your question(s) ahead of time through the organizers. For reservation and more details, call or email: Angie Mamaril at 783-1857 (angiehmamaril@yahoo.com); Lois Manese at 286-8663 (eloisa_manese@yahoo.com); Cris Bucalig at 287-0945 (cris_bong@yahoo.com); Rose Badidoy at

588 0425 (roseannbadidoy@yahoo.com); Butch Ordas at 789-9276 butchordas@yahoo.com); Gloria Balila at mgm-balila@yahoo.com; Paul Sanjel (paulangelosaniel@yahoo.com); or Yho Villavicencio at 285-9017 (yhbowl300@gmail.com). (PR)

PH consulate to hold outreach on Saipan

The Philippine Consulate General in Agana, Guam, in coordination with Philippine Honorary Consul to CNMI Glicerio Arago, will conduct a consular outreach mission on Saipan on March 3 to 5, from 8am to 4pm at the Kristo Rai Parish in Garapan.

Biometrics and personal data capturing for ePassport applications will be done according to schedule. All ePassport applicants are reminded to check the list so that they

are aware of their respective schedules.

Those who are on the list of ePassport applicants are reminded to:

1. show up at the venue on the date and time indicated in the schedule; and
2. wear proper attire (i.e. with collar and sleeves)

For consular services, including passport renewal, that require civil registration documents (e.g. birth certificate and marriage certificate), documents from the Philippine Statistics Authority or from former National Statistics Office will be accepted.

Please note that personal appearance is required for all ePassport applications.

For confirmation and clarification, call (670) 233-6293 and ask for Mel Santos or email eppt.pcgagana@gmail.com. (PR)



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THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an estimated \$1,361,000.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of \$870,145.00 in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); \$421,257.00 in Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); and, \$69,598.00 in Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds for Program Year (PY) 2019.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of persons. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention and rapid re-housing activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

- Program Year 2019 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds will be utilized for the following projects: Rehabilitation of the Tinian Gymnasium Basketball Court; Rehabilitation of the Rota Youth Center; Rehabilitation of the Tanapag Youth Center; Rehabilitation of the Sinapalo Children's Park Roof.
- Program Year 2019 Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds will be used for repaid re-housing of homeless families in the CNMI.
- Program Year 2019 HOME funds will continue to be used to assist families in new construction, rehabilitation, and purchase of a home.
- Consolidated Plan: The NMHC is preparing its Five (5) Year Consolidated Plan and is soliciting comments and input on the priority needs, goals, and objectives for the next five (5) years.

A briefing will be conducted to the public to discuss regarding the CPD program funds. The briefing will also enable the community to comment on the use of the program funds and to obtain information regarding the CPD program process.

The schedules and venues for the briefing are as follows:

Rota: Sinapalo Youth Center; Sinapalo: March 08, 2019: 3:00 p.m.

Tinian: Mayor's Office Conference Room, San Jose: March 12, 2019: 3:00 p.m.

Saipan: NMHC Central Office Conference Room, Garapan: March 15, 2019: 3:00 p.m.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the briefing so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries concerning the CPD programs, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Mr. Jacob Muna, Planning Assistant at 234-6866 or 234-7689.

/s/ Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP 19-CHCC/H.O.M.E. VISITING-009

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 25, 2019 • TIME: 09:00AM

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
H.O.M.E VISITING
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

COPIES OF THE RFP PACKET MAY BE PICKED-UP AT CHCC PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY DIVISION-MEDICAL SUPPLY STORAGE FACILITY LOWER BASE SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS. THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ PRISCILLA M. JAKOPO
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

The U.S. Navy INVITES YOU TO PARTICIPATE in the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Supplemental EIS/OEIS Public Involvement Process

The U.S. Navy has prepared a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with ongoing military readiness activities conducted within the Mariana Islands Training and Testing (MITT) EIS/OEIS Study Area. The draft supplement to the 2015 MITT Final EIS/OEIS supports ongoing and future activities conducted within the Study Area at sea and on Farallon de Medinilla (FDM).

Public Involvement

The Navy welcomes your review and comments on the Draft Supplemental EIS/OEIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, online at www.MITT-EIS.com, or by mail to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific
Attention: MITT Supplemental EIS/OEIS Project Manager
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100
Pearl Harbor, HI 96860-3134

Comments must be postmarked or received online by March 18, 2019, Chamorro Standard Time, for consideration in the Final Supplemental EIS/OEIS.

Open House Public Meetings: 5 to 8 p.m.

Arrive and submit comments anytime during the open house. No presentation or formal oral comment session will be conducted.

GUAM
Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019
University of Guam
Jesus and Eugenia Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building
Anthony Leon Guerrero Multi-Purpose Room 129 and Henry Sy Atrium
Mangilao, Guam 96923

SAIPAN
Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019
Kanoa Resort Saipan Seaside Hall
Beach Road in Susupe
Saipan, MP 96950

The draft document is available online at www.MITT-EIS.com or at the following public libraries: University of Guam Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Library, Nieves M. Flores Memorial Library, Joeten-Kiyo Public Library, Tinian Public Library, and Rota Public Library.

relevant university's Financial Aid Office can determine the amount of aid needed. Funding for the scholarships comes in part from the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office and Pacific Island Fisheries Science Center.

For further details, contact Sylvia Spalding at info.wpcouncil@noaa.gov or phone (808) 522-8220. (PR)

Scheduled power outages

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there will be scheduled power interruptions on the following date, times and locations:

■ Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019 – 8am to 1pm

- Outage Type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Feeder 1 and Feeder 3 double distribution circuit.
- Village location: China Town and Gualo Rai
- Area(s) affected: Commonwealth Drive, China Town
- Water well(s) affected: Gualo Rai wells and As Falape booster stations
- Water service area(s) affected: Gualo Rai and As Falape
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: GR1
- Pole replacement(s): 3

■ Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019 – 8am to 4pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on the Feeder 2 distribution circuit
- Village location: Garapan
- Area(s) affected: Beach Road, Garapan
- Water Well(s) affected: None
- Water service area(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: 5-10
- Pole replacement(s): 4

■ Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019 – 8am to 1pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on Feeder 1 and Feeder 3 double distribution circuit
- Village location: China Town
- Area(s) affected: Sugar Road King Road, China town
- Water well(s) affected: As Falape booster
- Water service area(s) affected: None
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: None
- Pole replacement(s): 3

■ Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019 – 8am to 4pm

- Outage type: Sectionalized feeder outage on Kiya 2 distribution circuit
- Village location: As Lito
- Area(s) affected: Chalan Monsignor Martinez Road, As Lito
- Water well(s) affected: AS1, AS2 and AS5
- Water Service area(s) affected: San Vicente
- Wastewater lift station(s) affected: W-10
- Pole replacements(s): 9 (PR)

IN DISMISSING FRAUD CLAIM AGAINST IPI

Manglona: Ex-IPI employee fails to specify lie about tips

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A mere expectation that one would get share of tips—without a statement or action by Imperial Pacific to support that expectation—does not constitute fraud, according to a federal court judge.

In dismissing the claims of a former VIP services host at the Imperial Pacific Resort and Casino, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona

V. Manglona said the party that alleges fraud must “state with particularity the circumstances constituting” the fraud.

“[Accusations] of fraud must be accompanied by the who, what, when, where, and how of the misconduct charged,” said Manglona, who cited precedent in her written order last Thursday.

In it, the judge explained the reasons behind her order that dismissed former Imperial Pacific VIP services host

Shirlene Loh’s fraud claim and two other claims against Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC.

Manglona said a plaintiff must “set forth more than the neutral facts necessary to identify the transaction” and explain “what is false or misleading about a statement, and why it is false.”

Loh is suing IPI for alleg-

edly not paying her minimum wage and overtime wages and refusing to give her customers’ tips.

Loh is claiming for violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act and Minimum Wage Hour Act, and conversion and fraud.

Loh is demanding that IPI be made to pay her the minimum wage and overtime pay. She also wants her share of tips.

IPI, through counsel Kelley M. Butcher, moved the court to dismiss Loh’s wage claim and claim for fraud.

In support of her fraud claim, Loh alleges that “tips were given by IPI customers to IPI for the specific purpose of rewarding VIP hosts for good service, with the direction that IPI pay these tips to the VIP hosts.”

Loh said IPI “refused to pay these tips to the VIP hosts, specifically her, and instead converted these tips to its own use.”

Loh said Yuki Xia, an IPI employee who supervised and managed the VIP hosts, “converted these tips to the use of IPI, failing, and refusing to pay her legitimate and rightful share of the tips.”

IPI asserts that these allegations about not passing along tips are not particular enough about the time, place, and circumstances to support a claim of fraud.

In her opposition, Loh matches the who, what, when, where, and how to statements in the complaint: “who” is Yuki Xia, “what” is customers’ tips, “when” is the whole period of employment in which tips were confiscated, etc.

But Manglona said this exercise misses the mark.

In her written order, Manglona said the “what” that must be specifically identified is the misrepresentation.

To avoid dismissal, Manglona said, the complaint “must state the time, place, and specific content of the false representation as well as the identities of the parties to the misrepresentation.”

“What did IPI’s representative say to Loh that led her to believe she would get a share of the tips? When did the representative say it? What action did Loh take in reliance on that false statement?” the judge said.

To all these questions, Manglona noted, Loh’s complaint gives no answer.

Manglona said because the complaint fails to specify a false statement regarding tips and fail to identify what action Loh took in reliance of that statement, the fraud component of her cause of action is inadequately pled as required by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

Loh is allowed to file an amended complaint to plead fraud by Feb. 28.

In the same order, Manglona dismissed as untimely Loh’s claims for violation of the Commonwealth’s Minimum Wage and Hour Act.

The judge said because amendment would be futile, they are dismissed with prejudice. That means Loh cannot re-file the two claims.

At the hearing last Feb. 14 on IPI’s motion to dismiss, Loh, through counsel William Fitzgerald, conceded that her

Commonwealth Minimum Wage and Court Act claims are untimely.

Manglona did not dismiss Loh’s other two Minimum Wage Hour Act violation claims that are on the federal basis.

Loh is a citizen of Singapore. She currently resides there. She worked for IPI from Oct. 15, 2015 to August 2016.



HUNKERING DOWN

Employees of the Saipan Mayor’s Office disassemble a tent in anticipation for Typhoon Wutip this weekend.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

H-2B cap for FY 2019 is reached

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has received enough petitions to meet the congressionally mandated H-2B cap for the second half of fiscal year 2019.

Feb. 19, 2019, was the final receipt date for new cap-subject H-2B worker petitions requesting an employment start date before Oct. 1, 2019. USCIS will reject new cap-subject H-2B petitions received after Feb. 19 that request an employment start date before Oct. 1, 2019.

On Feb. 19, the number of beneficiaries USCIS received petitions for surpassed the total number of remaining H-2B visas available for the H-2B cap for the second half of FY 2019. In accordance with regulations, USCIS determined it was necessary to use a computer-generated process, commonly known as a lottery, to ensure the fair and orderly allocation of H-2B visa numbers to meet, but not exceed, the remainder of the FY 2019 cap. On Feb. 21, USCIS conducted a lottery to randomly select petitions from those received on Feb. 19. As a result, USCIS assigned all petitions selected in the lottery the receipt date of Feb. 22. Premium processing service for

petitions selected in the lottery also began on that date.

USCIS continues to accept H-2B petitions that are exempt from the congressionally mandated cap. This includes petitions for:

Current H-2B workers in the United States petitioning to extend their stay and, if applicable, change the terms of their employment or change their employers;

Fish roe processors, fish roe technicians, and/or supervisors of fish roe processing; and

Workers performing labor or services in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands and/or Guam from Nov. 28, 2009, until Dec. 31, 2029.

U.S. businesses use the H-2B program to employ foreign workers for temporary nonagricultural jobs. Currently, Congress has set the H-2B cap at 66,000 per fiscal year, with 33,000 for workers who begin employment in the first half of the fiscal year (Oct. 1 - March 31) and 33,000 for workers who begin employment in

the second half of the fiscal year (April 1 - Sept. 30) plus any unused numbers from the first half of the fiscal year, if any. However, unused H-2B numbers from one fiscal year do not carry over into the next. (PR)

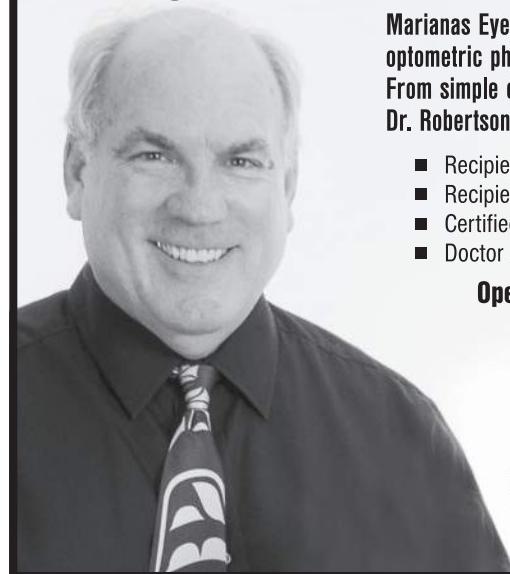
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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-19-012

ISLAND WIDE WATER METER INSTALLATION, SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Island Wide Water Meter Installation, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

This Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity work consists of installing new service saddles, corporation stops, PVC service lines from the CUC water main to the meter, replacing defective water meters, installing new service laterals and new water meters, properly sizing existing service lines, installing a water meter on existing CUC service lines without a meter, relocating existing CUC water meters from private property to public easement, reconfiguring the orientation of water meters to easily identify customers, removing existing manifold systems, and as required, installing new service lines from the meter to the house plumbing. It may also be required to connect existing service lines to a new meter and/or house piping.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check, or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **February 12, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.15, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Seven (7) hard copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**Island Wide Water Meter Installation, Saipan**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 6, 2019**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A **Bid Guarantee** of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A **Payment Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent and a **Performance Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 21, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email - manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Support Assistant – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Procurement Administrator



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-19-013

AGINGAN PRIMARY SCREEN PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for the attainment of a Primary Screen for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant at CUC Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. The RFP package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-work will be emailed to all registered prospective proposers email ID. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and four (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-RFP-19-013, Agingan Primary Screen Project**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 21, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A **Proposal Guarantee** of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A **Payment Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent and a **Performance Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discuss and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: <https://marianaslabor.net>. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator at email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Western Knudsen, P.E., Senior Engineer for Water/Wastewater at email address western.knudsen@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrative Technician, Senior at email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

US, FSM mark Operation Hailstone

HONOLULU—Continuing U.S. Coast Guard commitment in the Indo-Pacific Region, Rear Adm. Kevin Lunday joined the U.S. delegation led by chargé d' affaires Heather Coble who met in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, for a bilateral meeting with the FSM Foreign Affairs Secretary Lorin Robert and the FSM delegation prior to the 75th commemoration of Operation Hailstone.

"The U.S. Coast Guard operates closely with the Federated States of Micronesia to conduct maritime search and rescue, ensure the safety and security of ports for vital maritime commerce, and counter illegal fishing in the FSM Exclusive Economic Zone that threatens its resource and national security," said Rear Adm. Kevin Lunday, commander, Coast Guard 14th District. "We continue to advance our close working relationship and alliance with FSM, Palau, and the Marshall Islands under the Compact of Free Association with the U.S. Together, we share common values and an alliance to ensure a rules-based order across Oceania that is vital to a free and open Indo-Pacific." Following the bilateral meeting, both delegations participated in commemoration ceremonies culminated with a wreath-laying in the Chuuk Lagoon.

The U.S. delegation also visited the Chuuk State seaport and Chuuk Public Utility Corp. power plant. Kembo Mida, general manager, briefed the delegation on the success of the

power plant and ongoing challenges to Chuuk's water supply during the current drought. The wastewater treatment plant was overhauled recently with funds provided through the COFA.

"The Department of the Interior has a long and cherished history with the Federated States of Micronesia," said Doug Domenech, assistant secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior insular and international affairs. "Through our relationship under the Compact of Free Association, together we have improved and built schools, hospitals, utilities, and other projects throughout the FSM that directly benefit the people of the FSM. We are proud of that legacy. We continue to collaborate as partners in the U.S.-FSM Joint Economic Management Committee and will continue to carefully consider future needs as we jointly manage the Compact Trust Fund together."

The Coast Guard is continuing to partner with FSM, Palau, and the Marshall Islands to build search and rescue capacity through training, mutual exchange, and joint fisheries enforcement patrols. This effort includes command center search and rescue courses in Guam including the FSM National Police as well as the orange boat program, painting the interior of skiffs orange to be more easily seen from the sky during searches, leading to a resolution on cases when such craft are beset by weather or suffer mechanical issues.

These consistent efforts led to resource support and delivery of supplies following ty-

phoons Mangkhut and Yutu in the fall of 2018, the joint rescue of three FSM fishermen one year ago, and the aid rendered to responders, passengers and crew of *Air Niugini* flight PX56 following its crash landing in Chuuk Sept. 28.

The Coast Guard and FSM are also pursuing bilateral operations with shipriders aboard Coast Guard ships to counter illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in FSM EEZ to improve resource security and regional stability. This relationship was most recently highlighted in September when the crew of the USCGC *Sequoia* conducted joint fisheries patrols in the FSM EEZ and on the high seas with the FSM shipriders and Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

More than half of the world's tuna comes from the Western and Central Pacific, according to the National Fisheries Institute, and fisheries are the primary economic driver in the Pacific, especially for small Pacific island nations. IUU fishing results in losses of more than an estimated 21 to 46 percent of catch representing a \$1.5 billion revenue loss in the region, according to the Marine Resource Assessment Group. This loss directly impacts regional stability, governance and increases the risk for other transnational crime from supplanted traditional fishing voids created by economic declines. This threat is why a robust multilateral enforcement presence is crucial.

The commemoration of Operation Hailstone pays homage to those who gave their lives promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific 75 years ago. The operation took place Feb. 17 to 18, 1944, and was a massive U.S. Navy air and surface attack on a concentration of the Japanese fleet in Chuuk Lagoon. The result was a victory over the Japanese forces, preventing the reinforcement of the Eniwetok garrison. This effort saw the destruction of cruisers, destroyers, auxiliary merchant ships, aircraft and a total loss of more than 4,500 FSM, Japanese and American lives. The bombardment of Operation Hailstone played an essential part in changing the tide during the World War II battle in the Pacific. Numerous wrecks remain from that decisive battle and are part of the world-renowned wreck-diving site in Chuuk, formerly known as Truk Lagoon. While Operation Hailstone was taking place, Coast Guard forces were participating in the simultaneous invasion of Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands to the east as part of the larger Pacific Campaign. (*USCG*)

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE BOARD OF REGENTS' REGULAR MEETING Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019 3:30pm BOR Conference Room, Saipan Campus



AGENDA

- I. Call Meeting to Order
 - A. Roll Call
 - B. Review and Adoption of Agenda
 - C. Review and Adoption of Minutes
 - 1. June 22, 2018 (Regular Meeting)
 - 2. August 17, 2018 (Special Meeting)
 - 3. September 27, 2018 (Regular Meeting)
 - 4. November 06, 2018 (Special Meeting)
- II. Public Comment Period

(Individuals may verbally testify on items on the agenda during the Public Comment Period. Comments should be limited to five (5) minutes. Written testimony is also accepted.)
- III. Reports and Action from Standing Committees
 - A. Finance Committee
 - B. Audit Committee
 - C. Human Resources Committee
 - D. Regent Nominating Committee
 - E. Program Committee
- IV. Old Business
 - A. Presidential Search
- V. New Business
 - A. FY 2020 Appropriations Budget Request
 - B. Legal Counsel
- VI. NMC Executive Reports
 - A. Interim President's Report
 - 1. Typhoon Recovery Updates
 - 2. Accreditation Update
 - 3. Legislative Update
 - 4. Academic Program Feature
- VII. Board Meeting Assessment
- VIII. Miscellaneous Items

Executive Session (At any time during the scheduled meeting of the Board of Regents may be required to enter into executive session to discuss matters deemed privileged and confidential)
- X. Adjournment

/s/Charles V. Cepeda
BOR Chairperson



Acting CNMI DPS commissioner Robert Guerrero, DPS counselor Grace Sablan Vaiage, and DPS personnel accepted the container this past Thursday.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DPS receives container of relief donation from Guam

The CNMI Department of Public Safety recently received a container of donated items from Guam, which the department will then turn over to local authorities that are handling the relief efforts in the wake of Super Typhoon Yutu in October 2018.

The department was assisted in receiving the donation by the office of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Guam Sen.

Wil Castro.

Acting CNMI DPS commissioner Robert Guerrero, DPS counselor Grace Sablan Vaiage, and all DPS personnel all volunteered to make this effort possible.

The donations came from local businesses and generous families in Guam, who looked to continue assisting those who were affected by Yutu.

Guerrero, along with DPS

personnel, were present to accept the container this past Thursday, stating that the department is thankful for the continued partnership between the Governor's Office, CNMI law enforcement and the office of Castro.

"Although, much of the relief efforts for typhoon Yutu have begun to slow down, our department, along with its officers and personnel, continue to look for

ways we are able to care for our community. Being tasked with public safety presents our officers with two responsibilities, one being to protect the citizens ensuring safety, and the other being to continuously look out for the community they serve. Our officers may seem strict at all times but deep down they all carry big hearts," said Guerrero.

"We all must work together as one community in the con-

tinuous efforts of bringing the Marianas back to normalcy. On behalf of the CNMI Department of Public Safety we would like to thank all who continue to keep the Mariana Islands and its community in their ongoing efforts of care and generosity," he added in a separate statement.

The department looks to host a community outreach event for the public, once weather permits. The community outreach event is a chance

for our youth and community members to meet the officers, and ask common questions, in hopes of bringing the department closer to the community.

For more information on upcoming community outreach event, follow the CNMI Department of Public Safety on Facebook or visit <http://www.dps.gov.mp/>. For additional information regarding this and more community outreach events stay tuned to local radio stations. (PR)

 **Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**
Office of the Executive Director 

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-19-006

KAGMAN WATERLINE AND BOOSTER STATION REHABILITATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Kagman Waterline and Booster Station Rehabilitation on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, on the installation of a new booster station to replace the existing Kumoi pump station. The work also includes and connection of a new 8-inch PVC transmission line and a new 6-inch PVC distribution line complete with all necessary valves, fittings, and appurtenances. It will also involve the rehabilitation of the existing deep well KG-131 and the reconnection of all customers onto new or existing waterlines within the project area. The Contractor shall complete the work in accordance with the plans, specifications and terms of the contract.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

*CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.*

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **February 28, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Conference Room No.15, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-19-006- Kagman Waterline and Booster Station Rehabilitation" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 21, 2019**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A Bid Guarantee of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2018** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, at email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to LCDR Travis Spaeth, CUC Water/Wastewater Senior Engineer at email travis.spaeth@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Support Assistant at email christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

AMERICA'S SBDC CNMI 

CDA COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY 

Date: February 26, 2019
Time: 9:00AM- 11:00AM

FREE TRAINING

Location:
CDA Board Room,
1st Floor, San Jose

Presented by:


Nicole Babauta
Director &
Business Advisor
CNMI SBDC

How to Start a Business

Learn how to get your business started with this step-by-step process that includes an introduction to business plans, legal forms of business ownership, funding options, and best business practices.

You will leave with vital information, resources, and tools that will help you to start and manage a business successfully. This training is an entry level training.

TO REGISTER:
<https://pisbdcn.ecenterdirect.com/events/4313>

For more information, visit our website at www.pacificsbdc.com or call **CNMI SBDC Office at 664-3018**



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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The dangerous rush to judge

The truth does not run, it walks. It's rarely known in an instant, or in 140 characters. Truth needs time to emerge, and patience from all of us to let that happen. The outrageous case of Jussie Smollett is just the latest proof of something we humans know well but keep forgetting.

Smollett, a black and openly gay actor on the TV show "Empire," reported that he was the victim of an ugly hate crime three weeks ago. Now Chicago police say he made it up. They charged him Thursday with disorderly conduct for falsely describing an attack by two men who yelled racist and homophobic slurs and tied a rope around his neck. Police say he paid the men to stage the attack, to draw attention to himself because he wasn't happy about his salary on the hit series.

Smollett's actions were troubling. Visibly angered Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson, who is black, said, "Why would anyone, especially an African-American, use the symbolism of a noose ... to further his own public profile?" But some initial reactions to Smollett's accusation, including by some political leaders, were also alarming. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Democratic Sens. Cory Booker and Kamala Harris quickly accepted Smollett's story. Harris tweeted that the alleged attack was an "attempted modern day lynching." A former prosecutor, Harris should know better.

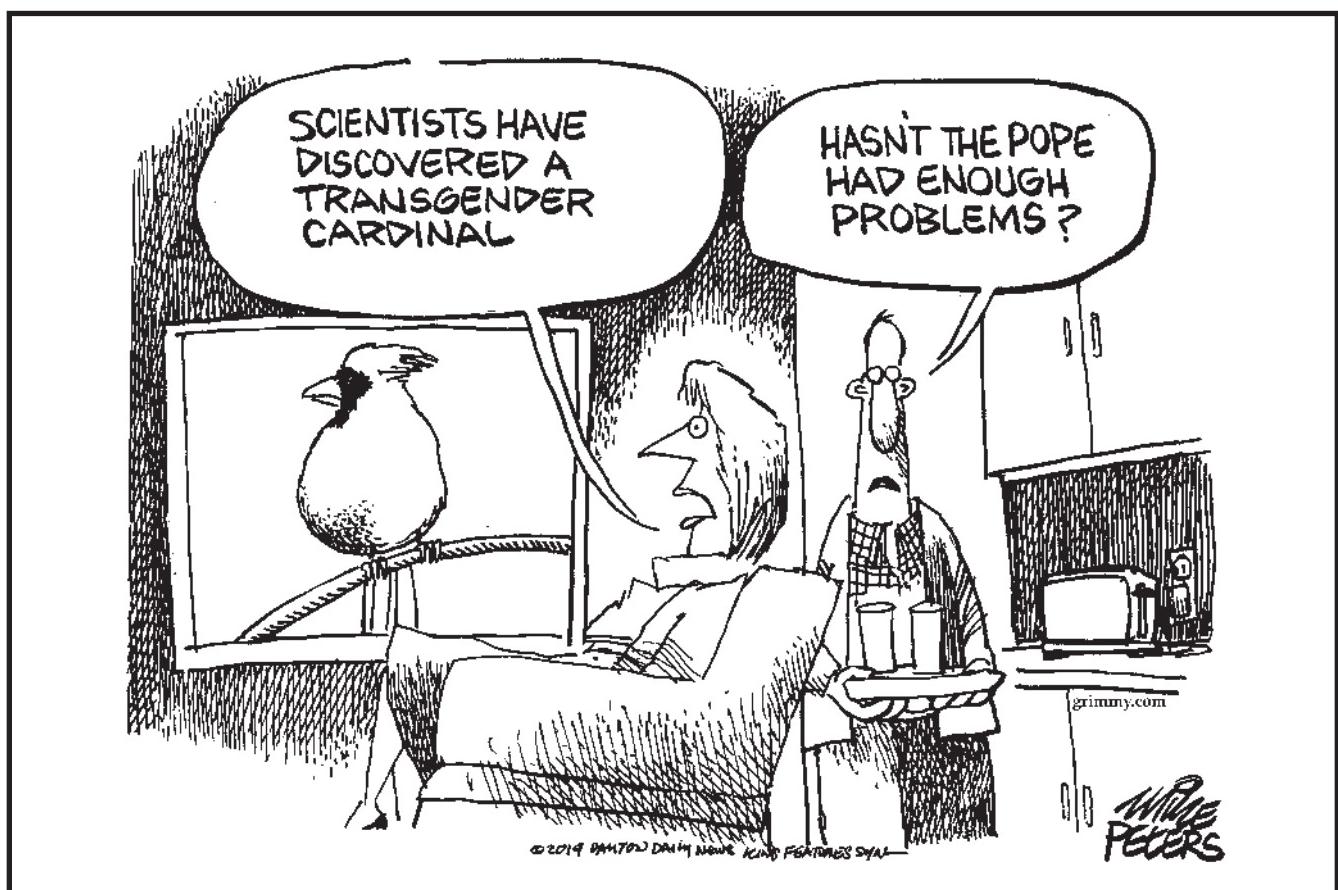
The filing of charges doesn't prove or disprove the wisdom of snap judgments attacking or supporting Smollett. Either way, they were ill-advised. But the moral of this debacle is more than a bromide about not rushing to judgment. It fits in a larger narrative that's poisoning our country. And if we don't learn from what's happening, we're doomed.

Ours is an age in which words don't seem to matter. They can't be trusted because they often are false. As it becomes more difficult to determine what's real and what's not, we divide ourselves by what we believe to be true. This didn't happen overnight. The virus infected us years ago. And the institutions that are supposed to keep us from fragmenting—religious, media, governmental—are not trusted or valued as they once were, either, after withering attacks on their credibility or irrelevance to people's lives. The spread of social media has been rocket fuel for this fire. Now we are so quick to believe or disbelieve, so quick to accuse or defend, so quick to pick a side and inflame a situation. And truth grows ever more fragile.

We must de-escalate. We must re-establish the norms that guide conduct. We need to rebuild our institutions, but better; some need fixes, some overhauls. And we must relearn the lesson that news, like science, is provisional. It builds upon itself as facts are gathered, and that takes time. What's understood today might not be true tomorrow.

American history is filled with incredible claims, some proved true, some hoaxes. Wrenching stories of abuse, even before the #MeToo era, invite us to pass judgment. Leaks from unidentified sources offer glimpses at purported crimes and exonerations. Chicago police investigated Jussie Smollett's story for more than three weeks. It was a long process, and that process revealed a contradictory and more complicated set of facts. Let's trust that truth, and remember that the next time we're tempted to quickly pick a side.

(c)2019 Newsday



5 things to be angry about

In an age of perpetual fear and outrage, I want to make your life easier. So here are today's five things you should be terrified and angry about:

1) Sex robots are going to kill us all. (Assuming we all decide to have sex with robots.)

A cybersecurity expert told the British newspaper the Daily Star that hackers could gain control of sex robots and use them to attack their freaky human love partners.

"Often these robots can be upwards of 200 pounds and very strong," said Nicholas Patterson, a cybersecurity lecturer at Deakin University in Australia. "Once a robot is hacked, the hacker has full control and can issue instructions to the robot. The last thing you want is for a hacker to have control over one of these robots. Once hacked they could absolutely be used to perform physical actions for an advantageous scenario or to cause damage."

This is terrifying for two reasons. First, there are apparently things called "sex robots." Second, and perhaps more importantly, if these sex robots are hacked by a foreign adversary, they could instantly wipe out America's strategic reserve of creepy dudes who look at their Roomba and think, "Oh, yeah. I'd like to get with that."

OK, maybe that part isn't so terrifying. It might just be a new form of natural selection.

But you should certainly feel angry that hackable sex robots exist. It's just one more thing to worry about.

2) The Chicago mayoral election is coming up and there's still no canine candidate.

As you probably know, there are 342 people running to become the next mayor of Chicago. It's impossible and extremely boring to remember all the candidates' names, so I refer to them collectively using the gender-neutral name Sam.

Sam is neither exciting nor inspiring. That's why Chicago deserves a canine mayoral candidate. Dogs are inherently good, many are tough on crime (barking) and, like many Chicago politicians, they are easily bribed.

We should all be outraged that none of the 342 candidates who make up Sam are dogs. It's species-ist, and it's robbing voters of a chance to elect a truly noble mayor who would capture the city's heart, generate vast numbers of viral videos and readily agree to be paid in Snausages.

3) Bernie Sanders is running for president.

If you're a Republican, you should be terrified because Sanders is a socialist masquerading as a Democrat and he will absolutely come and take all your money while changing America's name to "Venezuela 2.0" and doing untoward things like giving people health care and decent pay.

If you're a Democrat who doesn't love Sanders and wants to make a slightly critical comment of him, you should be equally terrified, because Sanders' cultlike supporters will swoop down on you like a swarm of online locusts and "actually" you to death while wishing great harm on your family and everyone

By REX HUPPKE

Chicago Tribune



Rex Huppke is a Chicago Tribune columnist. Readers may send him email at rhuppke@chicagotribune.com.

you hold dear. That's because they are open-minded and believe in fairness.

4) Something involving a Kardashian has happened.

When anything involving a Kardashian happens, we should all be angry, because whatever the insipid Kardashian development is, it will find a way to creep into our news feeds and take up space in our minds, which are already preoccupied worrying about Bernie Sanders and killer sex robots, not necessarily in that order.

What is the new Kardashian thing that has happened? I don't know. There are so many Kardashians I can't keep them straight, so I just refer to them all as Sam, which gets confusing since that's also the name of the Chicago mayoral candidates.

I'm fairly sure Sam Kardashian has split up with someone who I'll call Biff Whateverton, likely because Biff cheated on Sam (OMG!) or otherwise did something so vacuous that it lowered the collective IQ of all humanity.

Regardless of the true nature of the Kardashian-related incident, we should all be enraged that it's distracting us from making sure a fine city like Chicago gets the Labrador retriever mayor it needs.

5) The Chicago Cubs have become your Fox-News-addicted uncle.

The ostensibly non-bonkers team chairman, Tom Ricketts, tried to smooth over revelations that his dad, Joe—better known as "the one with all the money"—likes to wallow in the fever swamps of racist right-wing conspiracy theories. The younger Ricketts did this in the most ineffective way possible, saying what amounted to: "Nah, dad's not racist! He just sent some bad emails! I LOVE MY DAD AND HIS MONEY!"

To make the once-lovable losers even less likable, the team has partnered with Sinclair Broadcasting to create a subscription-based Cubs television station. Sinclair Broadcasting is a wildly conservative operation that forces its stations to air right-wing propaganda pieces aimed at scaring people like the elder Ricketts into thinking Muslims are coming to America to steal their apple pie.

If I was a Cubs fan and wasn't so distracted by Sam Kardashian, I'd be furious about this news. But then again, what does it matter?

We're all going to die from hacked sex robot attacks anyway.

US is a rich country with symptoms of a developing nation

The other day I was late to dinner, but it wasn't my fault. Traffic was backed up throughout the city of San Francisco, because chunks of concrete had started falling from the upper deck of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Unfortunately, this wasn't a particularly unusual occurrence—in 2016, the Bay Bridge was shut after concrete chunks began to fall from the walls of a tunnel. Nor are such issues limited to bridges—the \$2.2 billion Transbay Transit Center was closed in late 2018 when cracks were discovered in the beams.

These little examples are the kind of incidents that one might expect to see in a developing country where things are built cheaply or badly. But California has ruinously high construction costs; Governor Gavin Newsom recently canceled most of the state's high-speed rail plan after the price tag ballooned from \$45 billion to \$75 billion. And these problems aren't limited to California; across the country, construction costs for both the public and private sectors have swelled as productivity has stagnated or fallen. It costs much more to build each mile of train in the U.S. than in heavily unionized France. No one seems to be able to put their finger on the reason—instead, the U.S. simply seems riddled with corruption, inefficient bidding, high land-acquisition costs, overstaffing, regulatory barriers, poor maintenance, excessive reliance on consultants and other problems. These seemingly minor inefficiencies add up to a country that has forgotten how to build. Unsurprisingly, much of the country's infrastructure remains in a state of disrepair.

All of this raises a disturbing question: Is it possible for a rich, industrialized country to fall back into the middle ranks? The United Nations classifies countries as developed, developing and a middle

category called "in transition." But it's generally assumed that the economies in transition are on their way up, not down.

The U.S. is still a very rich nation—richer than countries such as Germany, Sweden, Japan, Canada or Denmark. But that wealth masks a number of glaring areas where the U.S. looks more dysfunctional than its peers. Construction costs are one of these. Another is health care—the U.S.'s hybrid public-private system ends up costing much more than other countries' government-dominated systems.

And this number is rising steadily. But for all this lavish spending, the U.S. tends to get worse health outcomes on many measures. Some alarming recent trends highlight just how much the system is failing. Five years ago, life expectancy, which is still rising in most other countries, began to fall in the U.S.

Most countries have also seen declines in maternal mortality. But in the U.S., the rate has risen in recent years.

And thanks in part to high construction costs and in part to restrictions on housing development, the country is facing a housing-affordability crisis.

It also has a tragic opioid epidemic. Suicide rates have risen substantially. Whole cities have had their drinking water contaminated with lead. Measures of corruption are rising. The list goes on. Other dysfunctions are more long-standing. The U.S. has an incredibly large prison population, and a violent crime rate much higher than other developed nations. It also has more poverty and hunger.

Some have suggested that the U.S. is actually two countries in one—a developed nation for the rich and a developing one for the poor. But recent trends like the fall in construction pro-

By NOAH SMITH

Bloomberg News

Noah Smith is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He was an assistant professor of finance at Stony Brook University, and he blogs at Noahpinion.



ductivity and the rise in health costs suggest that inequality isn't the whole story here. The U.S. is simply becoming less efficient along a broad spectrum of measures.

How long can this loss of efficiency go on without hurting the country's overall wealth? Nobody knows, but if the U.S. does eventually backslide in terms of gross domestic product, it wouldn't be the first rich country to have done so in recent years. Italy has already traveled that path.

Italy has been politically dysfunctional and divided for a long time. For almost a decade, a corrupt, divisive, populist president, Silvio Berlusconi, made the situation worse. The comparison with the U.S. certainly doesn't look encouraging.

The U.S. shouldn't wait and see if current trends persist. Instead, there needs to be a national focus on reducing excessive costs in key industries, improving the population's health, increasing density in the country's sprawling cities, upgrading public transit, and reducing corruption and waste in both the public and private sectors. If the U.S. wants to remain a developed country, it should try to look and act more like one.

My mother's broken promise

By MARGARET COLLIER
THE BALTIMORE SUN

Two years ago this week, on Feb. 20, 2017, my mother broke a promise to me. It was the only one she ever broke.

About 30 years ago, when friends began to lose their parents, I asked my mother to promise she'd never die. "Don't be silly," she said. "No one can promise that." Over the 20 or so years after that, I'd ask her over and over to promise she'd never die. Same answer every time.

About 10 years ago, when she was 80, I guess I'd finally worn her down. "Yes," she said. "I promise." I was immeasurably, natively, hopelessly relieved. "Well," I thought. "That's that."

I saw her as often as I could while I lived in Ohio. Finally, I moved back to Baltimore, where my parents lived, and enjoyed their company at least twice a week in a nearby retirement community. I never sensed they were aging; I saw them every couple

of days and they always seemed the same to me.

But eventually, and inevitably, things changed, despite my mother's promise. In January 2017, my mother had a few falls, breathing troubles and other ailments. I was working at the time, and when I was alone in the car, traveling to and from my parents' apartment, the care center, the hospital, I remember vividly thinking that if my mother dies, I will simply not be able to stand it. I'd actually get short of breath, my heart would almost beat out of my chest and tears would run down my face.

Finally, she was in hospice and I came to realize that she might just break that promise. She was a trouper during the process. She knew what was happening, although I continued to deny it, and once even asked "how long is this going to take?" after she was surprised to wake up in the middle of the night.

If she dies, I thought, will I feel betrayed by her promise—the one I clung to so childishly? Soon it wasn't a question of "if," so much as "when." On Feb. 20, 2017, my mother passed away

in her hospice bed while I held her hand. It was quieter than I thought, less dramatic than I anticipated: She opened her eyes and quickly closed them, and then she was gone. For a few days, I was sort of paralyzed in my grief. I cried; I received calls and visits; we did the funeral and reception exactly as we'd promised (and as she had prescribed).

And then life went on for my father, my family and everyone else. But my mother's promise? Not really broken: I see her every day in the things she's given me and the traits I inherited from her. I hear her every day in my own voice and my sister's. I smell her in her favorite perfume on my vanity. And sometimes, I even feel her brush by me, touch my face or come in a happy dream that makes me smile when I wake up from it.

I guess, after all, she kept her promise, just not the way I thought, but she kept it all the same.

Margaret Collier is a retired human resources professional. She wrote this for the Baltimore Sun.

Poets and Poems for Black History Month

Here is a random selection of 20th century black American poets and samples of their poems for readers as we celebrate Black History Month in February. Let us start with US poet laureate Gwendolyn Brooks (1917 - 2000). This poem (in its entirety here) can be found in many high school and college English textbooks and many poetry anthologies:

We Real Cool

THE POOL PLAYERS.
SEVEN AT THE GOLDEN SHOVEL.

We real cool. We
Left school. We
Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We
Sing sin. We
Thin gin. We
Jazz June. We
Die soon.

Poets often write poems in homage of other poets. I include Gwendolyn Brooks' poem (also in its entirety) about African-American poet Langston Hughes (1902-1967), an early writer of "jazz poetry" and leader of the Harlem Renaissance, in the hope that readers will seek out and read his poetry and the poetry of others sampled here.

Langston Hughes
is merry glory.

Is saltatory.
Yet grips his right of twisting free.

Has a long reach,
Strong speech,
Remedial fears,
Muscular tears.

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)—an excerpt

It may be misery not to sing at all
And to go silent through the brimming day
It may be sorrow never to be loved
But deeper griefs than these beset the way.

His wife, Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson (1875-1935), an excerpt

Pitifully calling me, the quick ones and the slain?
You need me Christ! It is no roseate dream
That beckons me—this pretty futile seam,
It stifles me—God, must I sit and sew?"

Claude McKay (1889-1948)—an excerpt

Her voice was like the sound of blended flutes
Blown by black players upon a picnic day,
She sang and danced on gracefully and calm,
The light gauze hanging loose about her form.

Leroi Jones (Amiri Baraka) (1934-2014)—an excerpt

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON'
CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired teacher and has been named a poet laureate of Tinian. He has taught English in CNMI public schools for the past 30 years. He has also taught in Alaska, New Orleans, and Las Vegas.



And now, each night I count the stars,
And each night I get the same number.
And when they will not come to be counted,
I count the holes they leave.

There are many young black poets writing and performing in the 21st century in rap, hip-hop styles, and fusions. Many are not glorifying drugs or lacing their work with vulgar language and misogyny. There are many who are writing strong commentaries on socio-economic conditions and poignant love songs as poets have done for centuries. Teachers, read some to your students. Parents, listen to the modern poems your children are listening and dancing to.

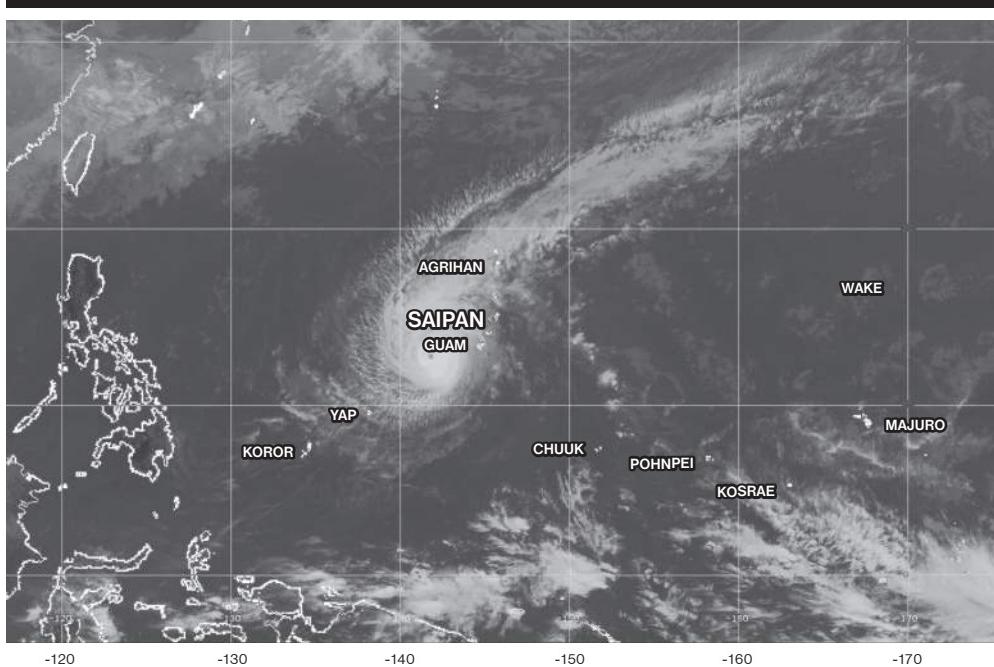
I will be conducting poetry workshops and readings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota during April 2019, National Poetry Month. Time and dates to be announced. Till then read some poetry.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Mostly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly sunny and breezy with isolated showers. Southeast winds 20 to 25 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
86°	77°	87°	77°	87°
77°	87°	77°	87°	77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:04 AM, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2019

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Super Typhoon Wutip is sitting nearly stationary about 190 miles WSW of Guam at 12.5N 142.3E, with max winds of 155 mph. Over the Marianas, skies are cloudy, with bands of showers still moving through, especially in Guam and Rota waters. Winds are still low-end tropical storm force at 30-40 mph for Guam, and breezy at 20-25 mph for Saipan. Seas are still hitting 20 ft in far western Guam waters, but are now around 16 ft at the Ipan buoy.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲	▼	°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	84°	/	76°
Palau	Cloudy	83°	/	75°
Yap	Cloudy	85°	/	79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	86°	/	81°
Pohnpei	Showers	84°	/	79°
Kosrae	Kosrae, FM	84°	/	79°
Majuro	Cloudy	84°	/	79°

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲	▼	°F
Auckland	Sunny	70°	/	57°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	73°	/	66°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	70°	/	63°
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	77°	/	64°
London	Partly Cloudy	61°	/	43°
Los Angeles	Sunny	64°	/	49°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90°	/	73°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	88°	/	61°
Miami	Sunny	78°	/	72°
New York	Windy	45°	/	27°
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	54°	/	39°
Paris	Sunny	59°	/	36°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	55°	/	43°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	61°	/	39°
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	64°	/	45°
San Francisco	Showers	55°	/	48°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	52°	/	30°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	54°	/	39°
Washington, DC	Cloudy	50°	/	31°



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 21, 2019

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:25pm	7:05pm	2, 4	UA104	4:50pm	5:31pm	2, 4
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:15am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:00am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:00am+1	1
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
				OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3403	4:35am	8:25am	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily				
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:20pm	4:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (GHG)				HANGZHOU (GHG)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	11:00am	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	9:35pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:30am	7:55am	2, 6	3U8645	7:55pm	2:40am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:15am	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA182/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA174	10:05pm	8:11am+1	Daily via GUM
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:30pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:40pm	2 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM	UA116/174	11:45pm	8:11am+1	2, 4 via GUM
				UA116/174	11:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
				UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7
				UA117/159	9:15am	11:00pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM
				UA105/159	4:45pm	11:00pm	2, 4 via GUM
STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.							
SAIPAN TO ROTA				1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM						

Business

Disabled greeter meets with Walmart about job; no resolution

A beloved, longtime Walmart greeter with cerebral palsy met with store management in Pennsylvania on Friday in a bid to keep his job but came away with no guarantees, and his family is girding for a fight.

Adam Catlin, who uses a walker and is legally blind, is worried he'll be out of work after store management told him he would need to be able to lift heavy weights, read receipts and perform other tasks. The retailer has been replacing "people greeters" with "customer hosts" who are responsible for helping with returns, checking receipts to help prevent shoplifting, and keeping the front of the store clean.

Catlin, 30—who has been a fixture at the Selinsgrove store since graduating from high school—and his family

met with Walmart officials for two hours Friday afternoon. His mother, Holly Catlin, said management suggested several other open positions, including cashier and photo lab assistant, none of which he is physically capable of doing.

She said she insisted her son could do the host job if Walmart would make reasonable accommodations, as required by federal disability law.

"Everyone was very nice, it wasn't ugly at all, but we didn't really get anywhere," Holly Catlin said. "I don't know where we stand, but I'm not backing down. He must still have a job. There's just no way around it."

Walmart said it's working with Catlin on a resolution.

"We recognize this is a



AP
In this Dec. 14, 2018 photo provided by Holly Catlin, Adam Catlin gets out of a car before starting his shift at a Walmart in Selinsgrove, Pa.

very available option to him," said Walmart spokesman Kory Lundberg. "We will be thoughtful during the process in hopes of finding a way for Adam to stay with the store."

At least a dozen disabled Walmart greeters in seven states—Illinois, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah and Wisconsin—say they were pushed out the door, forced to accept lower pay or otherwise harmed when the retailer replaced the greeter job with host, according to the National Disability Rights Network, whose state affiliates are working with impacted employees, and in some cases suing Walmart.

The issue exploded into public view after Catlin's mother wrote an impassioned Facebook post this week, and thousands of people have since rallied to his cause.

Holly Catlin said she has personally heard from 25 or 30 disabled Walmart greeters who told her they have lost their jobs.

"What makes me really sad is if we fix this for Adam, there are still those 25 or 30 people who are still out of a job and don't know where to turn. It makes me sick," she said. "I feel I need to go to bat for them." (AP)

unique situation and it will take time to explore possible solutions. As we phase the greeter role out of this store over a 60-day period, our store management and local hu-

man resource teams will be in regular contact with Adam and his family as we explore ev-

Buffett encourages investors to bet on American economy

OMAHA, Neb. (AP)—Billionaire Warren Buffett says the company he built through decades of acquisitions continues to perform well even though he hasn't found any major deals at attractive prices recently.

Buffett released his annual letter to Berkshire Hathaway Inc. shareholders on Saturday. He wrote that investors should continue betting on the American economy because Berkshire has prospered by doing so, but that they shouldn't forget about the rest of the world.

"There are also many other countries around the world that have bright futures. About that, we should rejoice: Americans will be both more prosperous and safer if all nations thrive," Buffett wrote. "At Berkshire, we hope to invest significant sums across borders."

Buffett's letter is always well-read in the business world because of his remarkable track record, his habit of dissecting the economy or other topics and his talent for

explaining complicated subjects in plain language.

But in recent years he has simplified his letters and focused mostly on Berkshire's businesses. The sage advice and wit that used to make Buffett's letters must-read publications is now reserved mostly for the company's annual meeting and interviews.

"To me, it's becoming less of an event," Edward Jones analyst Jim Shanahan said of the letter.

Buffett wrote that the two potential successors he promoted last year to oversee most day-to-day operations are doing well, but the 88-year-old tycoon made no mention of retiring.

Longtime Berkshire executives Greg Abel and Ajit Jain joined the company's board last January and took on additional responsibilities. Jain now oversees all of the conglomerate's insurance businesses while Abel oversees all of the conglomerate's non-

insurance business operations.

"These moves were overdue," Buffett said. "Berkshire is now far better managed than when I alone was supervising operations. Ajit and Greg have rare talents, and Berkshire blood flows through their veins."

Buffett wrote that Berkshire continues to hold roughly \$130 billion in cash and short-term investments because he hasn't found any reasonably-priced acquisitions in recent years, so he'll likely continue investing more in stocks.

"Prices are sky-high for businesses possessing decent long-term prospects," he wrote.

Shanahan, the Edward Jones analyst, said he was disappointed that Berkshire didn't use more of its cash to repurchase its own shares or invest in other stocks, especially when the market declined near the end of the year.

Berkshire reported a \$4 billion profit for last year as most of its eclectic mix of businesses—including BNSF

Utility cancels \$130M in worker performance bonuses

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Northern California utility Pacific Gas & Electric said it won't award \$130 million in employee bonuses because of its recent bankruptcy filing, a newspaper reported Saturday. Interim chief executive John Simon cited California's deadly wildfires and the company's precarious financial state in an internal email message to workers on Friday, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. Senior

Report: Kushner family firm pays \$1.1B for 6,000 apartments

NEW YORK (AP)—The real estate firm run by White House adviser Jared Kushner's family has pulled off its biggest deal in more than a decade. Kushner Cos. paid \$1.1 billion for a portfolio of about 6,000 apartments in Maryland and Virginia that had been owned by Lone Star Funds, according to a story published Friday by The Wall Street Journal. It marks Kushner Cos.' most expensive purchase since paying \$1.8 billion for a Manhattan skyscraper in 2007. The debt taken on in that 2007 deal strained Kushner Cos.' finances until last year when it sold the building to Brookfield Asset Management.

The 41-story tower located at 666 Fifth Ave. still serves as Kushner Cos. headquarters as part of a 99-year lease with Brookfield.

railroad, Geico insurance and several large utilities—performed well. But that was significantly lower than the previous year \$45 billion because Berkshire had to write down the paper value of many of its stock holdings.

Still, Andy Kilpatrick said the results were better than he expected.

"Berkshire's operating businesses are doing great," said Kilpatrick, a retired stockbroker and author who wrote "Of Permanent Value: The Story of Warren Buffett." "I'm glad to see there's no talk of retirement."

Berkshire Hathaway Inc. owns more than 90 companies, including the railroad and clothing, furniture and jewelry businesses. Its insurance and utility businesses typically account for more than half of the company's net income. The company also has major investments in such companies as Apple, American Express, Coca-Cola and Wells Fargo & Co.

Nation

Sheriff: No likely survivors in jetliner crash near Houston

HOUSTON (AP)—A Boeing 767 cargo jetliner heading to Houston with three people aboard disintegrated after crashing Saturday into a bay east of the city, according to a Texas sheriff.

Witnesses told emergency personnel that the twin-engine plane “went in nose first,” leaving a debris field three-quarters of a mile long in Trinity Bay, Chambers County Sheriff Brian Hawthorne said.

“It’s probably a crash that nobody would survive,” he said, referring to the scene as “total devastation.”

The cargo plane made a steep descent shortly before 12:45 p.m. from 6,525 feet to 3,025 feet in 30 seconds, according to tracking data from FlightAware.com.

The flight was being operated for Amazon by Atlas Air, according to a statement from the airline. “Our main priority at this time is caring for those affected and we will ensure we do all we can to support them now and in the days and weeks to come,” Atlas Air said in a statement.

Dave Clark, senior vice president of Worldwide Operations at Amazon, said: “Our thoughts and prayers are with the flight crew, their families and friends along with the entire team at Atlas Air during this terrible tragedy. We



Law enforcement officers man a road block leading to a staging area during the investigation of a plane crash in Trinity Bay in Anahuac, Texas, Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019. AP

appreciate the first responders who worked urgently to provide support.”

Witnesses said they heard the plane’s engines surging and that the craft turned sharply before falling into a nose-dive, Hawthorne said.

California parents of 13 plead guilty to torture, abuse

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP)—As prosecutors brought charges of cruelty and torture against a California couple who had shackled and starved their children for years, they had two goals in mind: Punish the perpetrators and ensure they could never victimize those 13 children in any way again.

On Friday they appeared to prevail on both counts as David and Louise Turpin pleaded guilty to 14 criminal charges in a deal prosecutors say will likely keep them in prison for the rest of their lives. At the same time, it will keep their children from the trauma of having to testify at a criminal trial that until Friday’s guilty pleas was scheduled to begin in September.

“Part of our job is to seek and get justice. But it’s also to protect the victims from further harm,” Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin said after the couple entered their pleas.

Louise Turpin’s face reddened, and she wept during the hearing as her husband remained stoic.

The couple, scheduled to be sentenced to life in prison on April 13, won’t be eligible for parole for at least 25 years, meaning David Turpin, 57,

and his 50-year-old wife are likely to die there.

“The defendants ruined lives, so I think it’s just and fair that the sentence be equivalent to first-degree murder,” Hestrin said.

The couple was arrested in January 2018 after their 17-year-old daughter jumped out a window of their home and called 911. She pleaded with a dispatcher for help, saying two of her younger sisters and a brother were chained to a bed.

“They will wake up at night and they will start crying and they wanted me to call somebody,” she said in a high-pitched voice. “I wanted to call y’all so y’all can help my sisters.”

Police who arrived at the address in a middle-class section of the city of Perris, about 60 miles (96 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles, found a house of horrors.

The children, ages 2 to 29 at the time, were severely underweight and hadn’t bathed for months. They described being beaten, starved and put in cages.

Two girls had been hastily released from their chains, but a 22-year-old son remained

Aerial footage shows emergency personnel walking along a spit of marshland flecked by debris that extends into the water.

Hawthorne told the Houston Chronicle late Saturday afternoon that police had found

human remains at the site of the crash.

Investigators have also recovered parts of the plane, he said. “There’s everything from cardboard boxes to women’s clothing and bed sheets,” Hawthorne said.

The largest piece from the Boeing 767 that police have recovered is 50 feet long, Hawthorne told the newspaper.

shackled. The brother told police he and his siblings had been suspected of stealing food and being disrespectful.

The family led a nocturnal existence, which kept them largely out of sight from neighbors.

David Turpin had worked as an engineer for Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman. Louise Turpin was listed as a housewife in a 2011 bankruptcy filing.

Although the parents filed reports with the state that they home-schooled their children, the oldest child only completed the third grade. Some children suffered from severe malnutrition, stunted growth and muscle wasting, including an 11-year-old girl who had arms the size of an infant.

Children were deprived of food and things other kids take for granted, such as toys and games. They were allowed to do little except write in journals, authorities said.

The kids were rarely allowed outside, but they did go out on Halloween and traveled as a family to Disneyland and Las Vegas. They spent most of their time locked in their rooms except for limited meals or using the bathroom.

The sheriff said recovering pieces of the plane and its black box containing flight data records will be difficult in muddy marshland that extends to about 5 feet deep in the area. Air boats are needed to access the area.

The plane had departed from Miami and was likely only minutes away from landing at George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston.

The Federal Aviation Administration issued an alert after officials lost radar and radio contact with Atlas Air Flight 3591 when it was about 30 miles (48 kilometers) southeast of the airport, FAA spokesman Lynn Lunsford said.

Air traffic controllers in Houston tried at least twice to contact but the plane but received no response.

After losing contact, then they asked a United Airlines pilot if he had seen “ground contact”—wreckage—to his right or behind him, according to recordings of the conversation. “That’s a negative,” he said.

They also asked a Mesa Airlines pilot: “See if you can make ground contact. We are looking for a lost aircraft ... it’s a heavy Boeing 767,” meaning it’s a big, two-aisle plane.

“No ground contact from here,” the Mesa pilot said.

The Coast Guard dispatched boats and at least one helicopter to assist in the search for survivors. A dive team with the Texas Department of Public Safety will be tasked with finding the black box, Hawthorne said.

Trinity Bay is just north of Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico.

FAA investigators are traveling to the scene as are authorities with the National Transportation Safety Board, which will lead the investigation.

ACROSS THE NATION

Chicago-area man gets 24 years for student’s drug death

WHEATON, Ill. (AP)—A suburban Chicago man convicted in the drug-induced death of a Spanish foreign exchange student has been sentenced to 24 years in prison. DuPage County Judge Liam Brennan sentenced 38-year-old Francis Emanuele of Downers Grove to 20 years behind bars Friday night for the drug-induced homicide of the 15-year-old girl and four years for indecent solicitation of a child. Emanuele pleaded guilty to the charges in November. The girl’s host parents found her dead at home on May 3, 2016. Prosecutors say investigators found an oral syringe with methadone in her bedroom and determined Emanuele gave her the drug. They say Emanuele knew the girl through another exchange student living with his family and exchanged sexually explicit texts with the girl. Prosecutors sought a 27-year sentence. Emanuele’s attorneys asked for 11 years.

Sheriff’s deputy shot, man dead in Tennessee during standoff

BLOUNTVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Authorities say a man who fired on sheriff’s deputies has died in a standoff at a Tennessee home in which deputies returned fire and one of the officers was shot and wounded. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation says 44-year-old Jackie Scott Pendergrass was found dead in the home where he had barricaded himself Saturday. A TBI

statement says Pendergrass fired at least one shot at deputies when they initially approached the home after receiving a request to check on his welfare. It says deputies withdrew, tried to communicate with Pendergrass and that the man later fired on officers, who returned fire. The statement says at some point Deputy Steve Hinkle was hit by gunfire and seriously wounded. The statement didn’t elaborate on how the man died or who had shot the deputy.

Man charged after grandma dies; bed filled with maggots

MELBOURNE, Fla. (AP)—A Florida man has been charged after his 87-year-old grandmother died and authorities say her bed was filled with live maggots. Brevard County Sheriff’s deputies say Allen Arias brought an unresponsive Anita Arias to the hospital last month. The woman was covered in bed sores and some were infested with maggots. A search warrant of the home revealed frozen dinners and dirty diapers stacked up and blood and feces stains on the bed and walls. Authorities said they also found full prescription bottles for Anita Arias who suffered from dementia. Authorities said she was in fair health when Allen Arias brought her home from a rehabilitation center in December. An autopsy showed she died of dehydration and emaciation and that her blood sugar was as high as could be measured. Florida Today reports Arias was charged Thursday with aggravated manslaughter of an elderly person.

Asia

North Korea leader Kim Jong Un boards train to summit

DANDONG, China (AP)—North Korea leader Kim Jong Un was on a train Sunday to Vietnam for his second summit with President Donald Trump, state media confirmed.

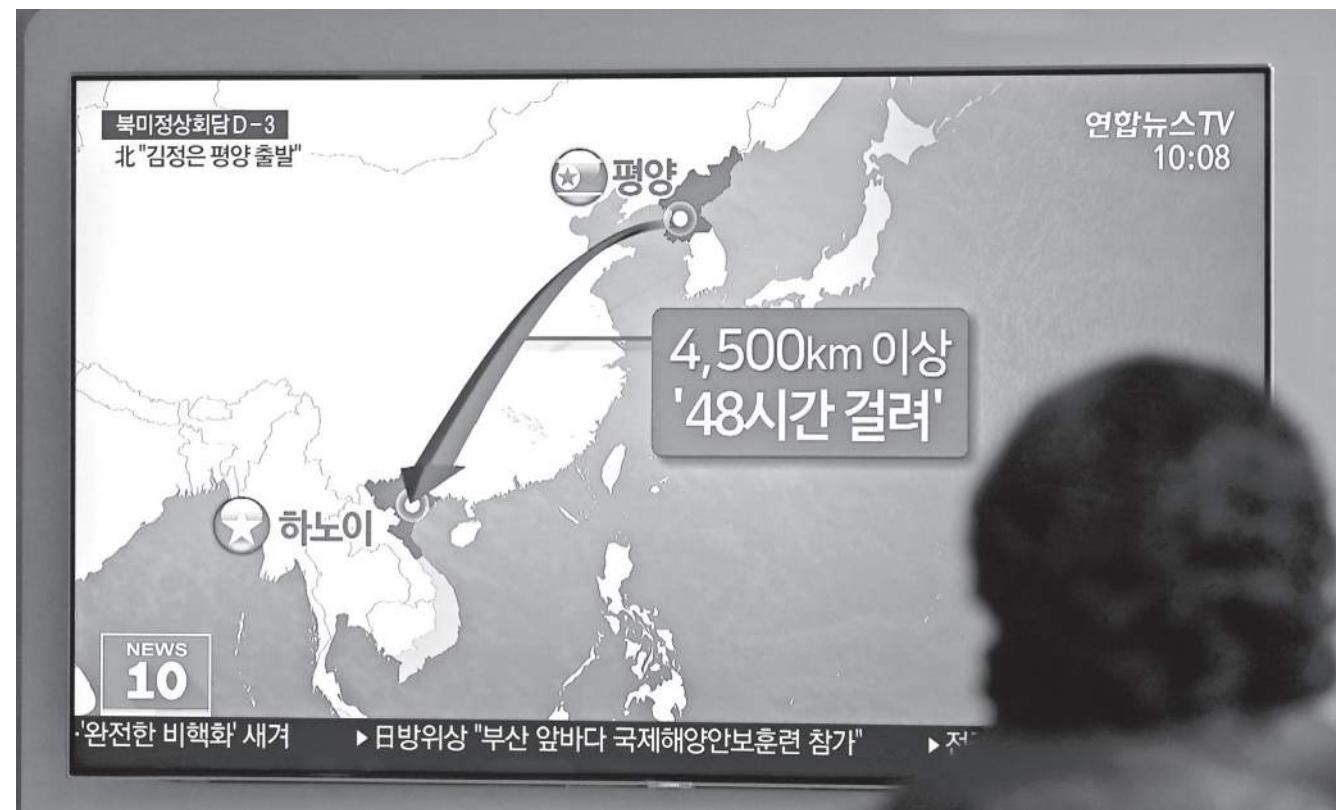
Kim was accompanied by Kim Yong Chol, who has been a key negotiator in talks with the U.S., and Kim Yo Jong, the leader's sister, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported. TV footage and photos distributed by the North's state-run news agency showed Kim inspecting a guard of honor at the Pyongyang station before waving from the train.

Late Saturday, an Associated Press reporter saw a green-and-yellow train similar to one used in the past by Kim cross into the Chinese border city of Dandong via a bridge.

The Trump-Kim meeting is slated for Wednesday and Thursday in Hanoi.

Their first summit last June in Singapore ended without substantive agreements on the North's nuclear disarmament and triggered a months-long stalemate in negotiations as Washington and Pyongyang struggled with the sequencing of North Korea's nuclear disarmament and the removal of U.S.-led sanctions against the North.

Kim's overseas travel plans



A woman watches a TV news program reporting about North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's departure for Vietnam at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019. AP

are routinely kept secret. It could take more than two days for the train to travel thousands of kilometers (miles) through China to Vietnam.

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry announced Saturday that Kim would pay an official goodwill visit to the country "in the coming days" in response to an invitation by President Nguyen

Phu Trong, who is also the general secretary of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party.

In his upcoming meeting with Trump, experts say Kim will seek a U.S. commitment for improved bilateral relations and partial sanctions relief while trying to minimize any concessions on his nuclear facilities and weapons.

While Kim wants to leverage his nuclear and missile program for economic and security benefits, there continue to be doubts on whether he's ready to fully deal away an arsenal that he may see as his strongest guarantee of survival.

Last year, North Korea suspended its nuclear and long-range missile tests and unilaterally dismantled its nuclear testing ground and parts of a rocket launch facility without the presence of outside experts, but none of those steps were seen as meaningful cutbacks to the

North's weapons capability.

While North Korea has repeatedly demanded that the United States take corresponding measures, including sanctions relief, Washington has called for more concrete steps from Pyongyang toward de-nuclearization.

Hanoi has been gearing up for the summit with beefed-up security. Officials say the colonial-era Government Guest House in central Hanoi is expected to be the venue for the Trump-Kim meeting, with the nearby Metropole Hotel as a backup. Streets around the two places have been beau-

tified with flowers and the flags of North Korea, the U.S. and Vietnam.

Workers were also putting final touches on the International Media Center. Vietnam's Foreign Ministry says some 2,600 members of the foreign press have registered for the event.

Also expected to land in Vietnam on Sunday was Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Lavrov will pay an official visit ahead of a Russia-India-China ministerial conference in China, according to Interfax news agency.

Meanwhile, Vietnam has announced a traffic ban along Kim's possible arrival route.

The Communist Party's mouthpiece Nhan Dan newspaper quoted the Department of Roads as saying the ban will first apply to trucks 10 tons or bigger, and vehicles with nine seats or more on the 170-kilometer (105-mile) stretch of Highway One from Dong Dang, the border town with China, to Hanoi from 7 p.m. Monday to 2 p.m. Tuesday, followed by a complete ban Tuesday on all vehicles from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The People's Committee in Lang Son province, where the Dong Dang railway station is located, issued a statement Friday instructing the road operator to clean the highway stretch and suspend road works, among other things, on Feb. 24-28 as "a political task."

Filipino rebel commanders become officials under peace deal

MANILA, Philippines (AP)

— Some of the fiercest Muslim rebel commanders in the southern Philippines were sworn in Friday as administrators of a new Muslim autonomous region in a delicate milestone to settle one of Asia's longest-raging rebellions.

President Rodrigo Duterte led a ceremony to name Moro Islamic Liberation Front leader Murad Ebrahim and some of his top commanders as among 80 administrators of a transition government for the five-province region called Bangsamoro.

About 12,000 combatants with thousands of firearms are to be demobilized starting this year under the peace deal. Thousands of other guerrillas would disarm if agreements under the deal would be followed, including providing the insurgents with livelihood to help them return to normal life.

"We would like to see an end of the violence," Duterte said. "After all, we go to war and shoot each other counting our victories not by the progress or development of the place but by the dead bodies that were strewn around dur-

ing the violent years."

About 150,000 people have died in the conflict over several decades and stunted development in the resource-rich region that is the country's poorest. Duterte promised adequate resources, a daunting problem in the past.

The Philippine and Western governments and the guerrillas see an effective Muslim autonomy as an antidote to nearly half a century of Muslim secessionist violence, which the Islamic State group could exploit to gain a foothold.

"The dream that we have fought for is now happening and there's no more reason for us to carry our guns and continue the war," rebel forces spokesman Von Al Haq told The Associated Press in an interview ahead of the ceremony.

Several commanders long wanted for deadly attacks were given safety passes to be able to travel to Manila and join the ceremony, including Abdullah Macapaa, who uses the nom de guerre Commander Bravo, Al Haq said. Known for his fiery rhetoric while wearing his camouflage uniform and brandishing his assault rifle

and grenades, Macapaa will be one of the 41 regional administrators from the Muslim rebel front.

Duterte would pick his representatives to fill the rest of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority, which will also act as a regional parliament with Murad as the chief minister until regular officials are elected in 2022.

Members of another Muslim rebel group, the Moro National Liberation Front, which signed a 1996 autonomy deal that has largely been seen as a failure, would also be given seats in the autonomous government.

Disgruntled fighters of the Moro National Liberation Front broke off and formed new armed groups, including the notorious Abu Sayyaf, which turned to terrorism and banditry after losing its commanders early in battle. The Abu Sayyaf has been blacklisted by the United States as a terrorist organization and has been suspected of staging a suspected Jan. 27 suicide bombing that killed 23 mostly churchgoers in a Roman Catholic cathedral on southern Jolo island.

China bars millions from travel for 'social credit' offenses

BEIJING (AP)

— Skipped paying a fine in China? Then forget about buying an airline ticket.

Would-be air travelers were blocked from buying tickets 17.5 million times last year for "social credit" offenses including unpaid taxes and fines under a controversial system the ruling Communist Party says will improve public behavior.

Others were barred 5.5 million times from buying train tickets, according to the National Public Credit Information Center. In an annual report, it said 128 people were blocked from leaving China due to unpaid taxes.

The ruling party says "social credit" penalties and rewards will improve order in a fast-changing society after three decades of economic reform have shaken up social structures. Markets are rife with counterfeit goods and fraud. The system is part of efforts by

President Xi Jinping's government to use technology ranging from data processing to genetic sequencing and facial recognition to tighten control.

Authorities have experimented with "social credit" since 2014 in areas across China. Points are deducted for breaking the law or, in some areas, offenses as minor as walking a dog without a leash.

Human rights activists say "social credit" is too rigid and might unfairly label people as untrustworthy without telling them they have lost status or how to restore it.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence criticized it in October as "an Orwellian system premised on controlling virtually every facet of human life."

The ruling party wants a nationwide system by 2020 but has yet to say how it will operate. Possible penalties include restrictions on travel, business and access to educa-

tion. A slogan repeated in state media says, "Once you lose trust, you will face restrictions everywhere."

Companies on the blacklist can lose government contracts or access to bank loans or be barred from issuing bonds or importing goods.

Offenses penalized under "social credit" last year included false advertising or violating drug safety rules, the government information center said. Individuals were blocked 290,000 times from taking senior management jobs or acting as a company's legal representative.

Since the launch of such "joint punishment," the system has caused 3.5 million people to "voluntarily fulfill their legal obligations," the Information Center said. It said that included 37 people who paid a total of 150 million yuan (\$22 million) in overdue fines or confiscations.

World

Venezuelan aid convoys meet fierce resistance; 2 killed

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP)—A U.S.-backed campaign to force President Nicolas Maduro from power met strong resistance Saturday from Venezuelan security forces who fired tear gas on protesters trying to deliver humanitarian aid from Colombia and Brazil, leaving two people dead and some 300 injured.

Throughout the turbulent day, as police and protesters squared off on two bridges connecting Venezuela to Colombia, opposition leader Juan Guaido made repeated calls for the military to join him in the fight against Maduro's "dictatorship." Colombian authorities said more than 60 soldiers answered his call, deserting their posts in often-gripping fashion, though most were lower in rank and didn't appear to dent the higher command's continued loyalty to Maduro's socialist government.

In one dramatic high point, a group of activists led by exiled lawmakers managed to escort three flatbed trucks of aid past the halfway point into Venezuela when they were repelled by security forces. In a flash the cargo caught fire, with some eyewitnesses claiming the National Guardsmen doused a tarp covering the boxes with gas before setting it on fire. As a black cloud rose above, the activists—protecting their faces from the fumes with vinegar-soaked cloths—unloaded the boxes by hand in a human



AP

Venezuelan demonstrators throw stones during clashes with authorities, at the border between Brazil and Venezuela, Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019.

chain stretching back to the Colombian side of the bridge.

"They burned the aid and fired on their own people," said 39-year-old David Hernandez, who was hit in the forehead with a tear gas canister that left a bloody wound and growing welt. "That's the definition of dictatorship."

For weeks, U.S. President Donald Trump's administration and its regional allies have been amassing emergency food and medical supplies on three of Venezuela's borders with the aim of launching a "humanitarian avalanche." It comes exactly one month after Guaido, in a direct challenge

to Maduro's rule, declared himself interim president at an outdoor rally.

Even as the 35-year-old lawmaker has won the backing of more than 50 governments around the world, he's so far been unable to cause a major rift inside the military—Maduro's last-remaining

plank of support in a country ravaged by hyperinflation and widespread shortages.

Amid the standoff, Guaido was turning to diplomatic actions.

As night fell, he refrained from asking supporters to continue risking their lives and make another attempt to

break the government's barricades. Instead, he said he would meet U.S. Vice President Mike Pence on Monday in Colombia's capital at an emergency meeting of mostly conservative Latin American governments to discuss Venezuela's crisis.

But he did make one last appeal to troops.

"How many of you national guardsmen have a sick mother? How many have kids in school without food," he said, standing alongside a warehouse in the Colombian city of Cucuta where 600 tons of mostly U.S.-supplied boxes of food and medicine have been stockpiled. "You don't owe any obedience to a sadist...who celebrates the denial of humanitarian aid the country needs."

Guaido later tweeted that he had decided to "propose in a formal manner to the international community that we keep all options open to liberate this country which struggles and will keep on struggling."

Earlier, Maduro struck a defiant tone, breaking diplomatic relations with Colombia, accusing its "fascist" government of serving as a staging ground for a U.S.-led effort to oust him from power and possibly a military invasion.

"My patience has run out," Maduro said, speaking at a massive rally of red-shirted supporters in Caracas and giving Colombian diplomats 24 hours to leave the country.

Told to leave, IS'caliphate' holdouts in Syria stay devoted

OUTSIDE BAGHOUZ, Syria (AP)—They were living in holes in the ground, with only dry flatbread to eat at the end. They had no clean water to drink, and no medical care for those wounded in an intense military campaign.

Yet, if it were not for the call from their leaders to leave, they would have stayed.

Such is the devotion of several hundred men, women and children who were evacuated Friday from the last speck of land controlled by the Islamic State group, a riverside pocket that sits on the edge of Syria and Iraq. Hundreds, if not thousands, more remain holed up in Baghouz—the last redoubt of the militants' self-proclaimed caliphate that leaders once said would stretch to Rome.

They include militants, of course, but also their family members and other civilians who are among the group's most determined supporters. Many of them traveled to Syria from all over the world. And they stuck around as the

militants' control crumbled.

"Baghouz maybe is the most difficult moments of all my life," said 21-year-old Um Youssef, a Tunisian-French woman who came to Syria at 17 with her mother. Food was scarce and water was dirty, but despite that, she said, she had no regrets.

Um Youssef—which means

mother of Youssef in Arabic—sent her two kids and her mother out of the pocket last month and stayed with her husband.

"I didn't make Hijrah (migration) for the food, or for the good life," she said. "It is jihad (holy war) for the sake of God."

At least 36 flatbed trucks used for transporting sheep carried the disheveled, haggard crowd out of the territory to a desert area miles (kilometers) away for screening. They were the latest batch of evacuees from the territory following airstrikes and clashes meant to bring about the militants' complete territorial defeat.

The evacuees included French, Polish, Chinese, Bengali, Egyptians, Tajiks, Moroccans, Iraqis and Syrians.

For now, the civilians are expected to be sent to a displaced people's camp, while suspected fighters will go to detention facilities. Previous evacuations have already overwhelmed camps in northern Syria, and at least 60 people who left the shrinking territory have died of malnutrition or exhaustion.

In a dusty area surrounded by grass, women in black head-to-toe robes and children in dirty jackets—many of them crying for food—formed a line. Men wearing tattered headscarves formed another. Foreign men filed into a third.

One woman had given birth in one of the trucks. An old man was carried in a blanket by two others to the screening line. A young girl sat under the shade of the wheel of a truck looking dazed, while another moved between the crowds, asking for food.

The evacuees included French, Polish, Chinese, Bengali, Egyptians, Tajiks, Moroccans, Iraqis and Syrians.

VATICAN CITY (AP)—A prominent Nigerian nun blasted the culture of silence that has long kept clergy sexual abuse hidden in the Catholic Church, telling Catholic leaders Saturday that they must transparently admit their mistakes to restore trust among the faithful.

A Mexican journalist followed up, telling the bishops and others at Pope Francis' abuse summit that their collective failure to report abuse and inform their flocks about predator priests made them complicit in the crimes.

In between those admonitions, a German cardinal admitted that church files about abusers had been destroyed, victims were silenced and church procedures were ignored—all in an attempt to keep the scandal under wraps.

Sister Veronica Openibo, Mexican correspondent Valentina Alazraki and German Cardinal Reinhard Marx delivered powerful speeches to nearly 190 church leaders on

the third day of Pope Francis' four-day tutorial on preventing abuse and protecting children.

The first two days focused on the responsibility of church leaders in tending to their flocks, and how they must be held accountable when they fail to properly protect young people from predator priests.

Saturday was dedicated to issues of transparency and breaking the code of silence. And it was dominated by women.

Openibo was one of only a handful of women invited to the meeting, and she used her time at the podium to shame the church leadership for their silence in the face of such crimes.

"How could the clerical church have kept silent, covering these atrocities?" she asked. "We must acknowledge that our mediocrity, hypocrisy and complacency have brought us to this disgraceful and scandalous place we find ourselves as a church."

Alazraki, the longtime Vati-

can correspondent for Mexico's Televisa, challenged the leaders to decide whether they are on the side of the priests accused of abuse and those who cover up the crimes, or the victims.

"We have decided which side to be on," she said, warning that unless they side with victims "journalists, who seek the common good, will be your worst enemies."

Marx called for a redefinition of the Vatican's legal code of secrecy and for the publication of statistics about cleric sex abuse. He said such transparency would be a first step toward restoring trust with the faithful.

Francis demanded that the conference be held to impress on church leaders that sex abuse isn't just a problem confined to a few countries, but the whole church. He did so after he botched a case of cover-up in Chile and after the scandal exploded in the U.S., sparking a crisis of confidence in the Catholic hierarchy.

Focus

Amid loss of leaders, unknown militant rises in Philippines

By JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Unlike many of his slain comrades, the touted new leader of the Islamic State group in the southern Philippines lacks the bravado, clan name or foreign training.

Not much is known about Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan, but the attacks attributed to him heralding his rise are distinctly savage: A deadly bombing, which authorities say was a suicide attack by a foreign militant couple, blasted through a packed Roman Catholic cathedral in the middle of a Mass.

The Jan. 27 attack, which killed 23 people and wounded about 100 others on southern Jolo Island, and another suspected suicide bombing on nearby Basilan Island last July that officials said he masterminded, put Sawadjaan in the crosshairs of the U.S.-led global campaign against terrorism. It also comes at a time when the Islamic State group's last enclave in eastern Syria is near its imminent downfall, signaling an end to the territorial rule of the self-declared "caliphate" that once stretched across much of Syria and Iraq.

A recent U.S. Department of Defense report to Congress said without elaborating that it believed Sawadjaan was the "acting emir," or leader, in the Philippines of the Islamic State group, also known by its acronym ISIS. It added that no actual leader is confirmed to have been designated by the main ISIS command in the Middle East as of late last year.

Philippine Interior Secretary Eduardo Ano, however, said intelligence indicated that Sawadjaan, a Jolo-based commander of the brutal Abu Sayyaf extremist group, was installed as ISIS chief in a ceremony last year. Three other extremist groups were recognized as ISIS allies, he said.

Founded in the early 1990s as an offshoot of the decades-long Muslim separatist rebellion in the south, the Abu Sayyaf lost its commanders early in battle, sending it to a violent path of terrorism and criminality. It has been blacklisted, along with ISIS-linked local groups, as a terrorist organization by the United States.

Now in his 60s, Sawadjaan is a late bloomer in the terrorism underworld.

His turn at the helm came after dozens of commanders, some initially aligned with the al-Qaida movement and



AP

This photo provided by Philippine National Police (PNP), shows militant Abu Sayyaf Group leader Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan in the PNP confidential report. Philippine and U.S. official say a little known militant has been named the new leader of the Islamic State group in the southern Philippines. The Philippine interior secretary says the rise of Hatib Sawadjaan, who is blamed for orchestrating a suicide bombing in a cathedral last month that killed 23 people on Jolo Island, shows that ISIS would latch on desperately to any militant who could provide a sanctuary and armed fighters as its last strongholds crumble in Syria.

later with ISIS, were killed or captured in decades of military offensives. The biggest battle loss came in 2017 when several foreign and local commanders were killed as troops quelled a five-month siege by hundreds of militants in southern Marawi city.

Among those killed was Isnilon Hapilon, a fierce Abu Sayyaf leader, who was the first ISIS-designated leader in the Philippines.

"I think Sawadjaan rose in rank because of seniority and there were no other leaders left. Almost everyone had been wiped out," said Ano, a former military chief who oversaw the Marawi offensives and now supervises the national police as interior secretary.

Largely confined to Jolo's poverty-wracked mountain settlements all his life, Sawadjaan was not the well-connected and media-savvy strategist foreign groups would normally ally with to expand their reach. His rise shows how ISIS would latch on desperately to any militant who could provide a sanctuary and armed fighters as its last strongholds crumble in Syria, Ano said.

"For the ISIS to perpetuate their terror actions, they need a base, they need people. That's the role of Sawadjaan," Ano told The Associated Press in an interview. He estimated that Sawadjaan commands about 200 combatants and followers.

Sawadjaan was born to a peasant family in predomi-



AP

In this Jan. 27, 2019, file photo, police remove the body of a victim from the scene after two bombs exploded outside a Roman Catholic cathedral in Jolo, the capital of Sulu province in southern Philippines. Abu Sayyaf commander Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan accused of plotting the attack in the cathedral may be harboring a foreign would-be suicide bomber in his jungle base, a senior official said Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019. Sawadjaan's goal was to assert his new role as Islamic State group leader in the southern Philippines.

sermon leader in Arabic, the officer said.

Sawadjaan first took up arms as a member of the Moro National Liberation Front, the largest Muslim secessionist group in the south of the largely Roman Catholic country, which went on to sign a 1996 Muslim autonomy deal with the government, according to the officer.

His commander was Radulan Sahiron, the locally popular one-armed rebel who broke away from the MNLF in 1992. They joined the Abu Sayyaf, which had just been organized by a Libyan-educated local militant, said MNLF leader Yusop Jikiri.

Sawadjaan would later part ways with Sahiron, including

over Sahiron's refusal to accommodate foreign militants for fear they're a magnet for military airstrikes, said Abu Jihad, a former militant who has met Sawadjaan and was captured by troops. Abu Jihad described Sawadjaan as a folksy village elderly, who constantly lugged an M-16 rifle in his hinterland community but was friendly to visitors.

When fellow militants kidnapped a visiting American Muslim convert, Jeffrey Schilling, for ransom in August 2000, Sawadjaan stayed in the background but helped gather bamboos that were used to build huts for the militants and their hostage, Abu Jihad said.

"He can discuss local issues but didn't have any wisdom on jihad," he told AP by phone, referring to the militants' concept of holy war. "He's very accommodating. He's the type who will not be hard to sway."

Sawadjaan collaborated with diverse outlaws, both Islamic extremists and brigands, Ano said.

He harbored the foreign couple, believed by Philippine officials to be Indonesians, who detonated the bombs in the Jolo cathedral last month, as well as a militant believed to be an Arab known as Abu Kathir al-Maghribi, who died in the van blast that also killed 10 government militiamen and villagers in Basilan last year, Ano added.

A video obtained by police officials showed al-Maghribi in Sawadjaan's camp last year before the foreign militant reportedly carried out the suicide attack in Basilan. The video was seen by The AP.

His daughter married a Malaysian militant known as Amin Baco, who has ISIS connections. His younger brother, Asman, also belonged to the Abu Sayyaf, according to a confidential police profile of Sawadjaan.

Sawadjaan and his men would later be implicated in the kidnappings of a German couple, two Canadian men, Schilling and a Jordanian journalist, Baker Atyani. Most were ransomed off or escaped but the Canadian men were separately beheaded on video by one of Sawadjaan's militant nephews, Ben Yadah, according to military and police officials.



AP

In this Jan. 27, 2019, file photo, police investigators and soldiers attend the scene after two bombs exploded outside a Roman Catholic cathedral in Jolo, the capital of Sulu province in southern Philippines. Abu Sayyaf commander Hatib Hajan Sawadjaan accused of plotting the attack in the cathedral may be harboring a foreign would-be suicide bomber in his jungle base, a senior official said Thursday, Feb. 7, 2019. Sawadjaan's goal was to assert his new role as Islamic State group leader in the southern Philippines.

Health & Wellness

WEIGHT LOSS

3 reasons your new diet won't work

Keto. Paleo. Flexitarian. Pegan. If you just made a resolution to stick to one of the hot new diets out there, good for you. Examining your eating choices is a smart way to recharge your health and fitness goals. Just remember that there

are some common stumbling blocks inherent in many of these trendy new diets that health experts warn you to be on the look out for. Otherwise there is a good chance your popular new diet will disappoint you and leave you searching for another magic diet bullet by spring. Here are three hidden dangers to consider.



Don't freak out about protein

The internet has recently been obsessed with whether most of us get enough protein. But, as US News notes, it's fairly easy to get all the macronutrients you need on even on a plant-based diet. A serving of vegetables like tomatoes, peppers and onions is actually 25 percent protein. Quinoa

contains 18 percent protein and beans as much as 27 percent protein. Heck, even dark leafy greens average 35 to 50 percent protein. If you are concerned about getting enough protein while trying to eat more plants, you can also try tossing some chickpeas atop your salad for a little extra boost.



Remember portion control

Just because you are all jazzed about eating no carbs or all organic or no gluten or whatever, remember that pigging out on healthy food can also make you fat. Some foods may have far more calories than you realize. So don't eat the whole cake just because it's gluten-free.

"People get caught up on going

Beware the low-fat label

Many foods with low-fat or similar claims may have not only more sugar but more artificial ingredients, preservatives, salt and calories than the full-fat versions, as CNN cites. For example, low-fat ice cream dressing may sound like a win-win, but it may well have more sugar than the full-fat kind. As one study reported, people often binge on foods that are labeled "low fat." In fact, "the mere mention of low fat significantly decreased the perceived calorie content and the anticipated consumption guilt, resulting in a larger perceived appropriate serving size." Remember the wolf in sheep's clothing?



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Tan Siu Lin Foundation



Many workers feel overweight, but don't use company's wellness perks

By JOYCE GANNON
PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

More than half of workers in a recent survey believe they have packed on too many pounds because they sit at their desks all day, engage in stress-induced eating and are too exhausted to exercise.

Yet among those who reported feeling overweight, more than half who have access to gyms or wellness programs through their employer say they don't use them because they can't squeeze exercise into the workday.

"It's a real conundrum," said Gretchen North, associate vice president, healthy living for the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh. "People know what they need to do but putting it into action is a different story."

The survey by CareerBuilder, a Chicago-based human resources and recruitment firm, was conducted online by Harris Poll from Feb. 10 to March 17, and included 3,031 full-time workers in the U.S. who were age 18 and older. No self-employed or government workers were included.

Among respondents, 55 percent said they feel overweight and 44 percent said they gained weight in their present jobs. Another 17 percent said they lost weight.

Stress at work was a significant factor among those who said they were too heavy. Of people who reported low stress levels on the job, 41 percent felt overweight while 77 percent of workers who experienced extremely high stress said they were overweight.

More women, 49 percent, reported weight gain at their current jobs compared with 39 percent of men.

Still, a majority whose employers provide wellness benefits said they don't use those benefits to combat their weight gain or stress issues.

Overall, 25 percent of survey participants said they had employer-sponsored benefits—including some who had access to on-site workout facilities—but 55 percent of those people don't use them.

There are challenges for some workers even when gyms or wellness classes are available at the workplace or at nearby health clubs, North said. Some supervisors don't allow employees enough of a lunch break to fit in a class or workout, shower and return to the office, she said.

And while some bosses allow it, some employees feel there's a perception they are not committed enough to the job if they take an extended break to exercise, North said.

While lunchtime classes at two downtown Pittsburgh YMCA facilities are typically packed between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., peak usage also occurs in the early morning and early evening hours because many members don't want to or can't leave their jobs in the middle of the day, North said.

Downtown workers who come to the YMCA for yoga, indoor cycling, kickboxing, high interval training, swimming and other workouts "aren't the folks we're trying to engage in being active," she acknowledged.

To reach a broader audience, the YMCA delivers programs to workplaces onsite, including a diabetes prevention program that the City of Pittsburgh offers to its employees at lunch time. "The city is covering the cost for employees and they therefore have built-in support to attend," North said.

The class sets goals for participants to reduce their weight by 7 percent over a year and increase their physical activity to 150 minutes per week.

Other businesses have asked the YMCA to provide the diabetes prevention classes at their work sites "and we see great participation and attendance because we make it convenient to the employee," she said.

Other programs the YMCA conducts at its regional branches and for employers on site include lunch-and-learn events, fitness classes and health workshops.

For people whose employers don't offer wellness programs or who don't live or work near a health club or can't afford a membership, there are still options during the workday.

If you work in a suburban office park, get outside and walk the campus, North said. In bad weather, walk the steps inside or set an alert on your computer or phone to get up from your desk and move around or stretch.

"Sitting is the new smoking," she said, crediting several researchers who have used that phrase to encourage healthy habits.

Life & Style

R. Kelly met underage girl while on trial for child porn

CHICAGO (AP)—While on trial for child pornography in 2008, R. Kelly still found time to talk to fans, give autographs and to meet an underage girl he later invited to his home, according to prosecutors who depicted the R&B star as manipulative and sometimes violent.

Indictments against R. Kelly list 4 victims

CHICAGO (AP)—Prosecutors on Friday charged R&B star R. Kelly with 10 counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse involving four female victims, including three who were younger than 17. Below are details of the allegations in the grand jury indictments and outlined by the Cook County state's attorney. Kelly's attorney says the singer strongly denies the charges:

CASE 1

Initials: H.W.

Incidents occurred between: May 26, 1998, to May 25, 1999

Kelly faces: 4 counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse

Additional details: H.W. met Kelly at a restaurant where she was celebrating her 16th birthday, which she told the singer. Kelly's manager gave her Kelly's business card with the singer's personal phone number on it and said Kelly wanted her to call.

The girl's mother overheard the exchange and took the card, telling the manager her daughter was only 16. The girl later took the card from her mother's purse and called Kelly, who told her to take a cab to his studio after her father had dropped her off at school.

Kelly had sex with her at his studio then told her to get an envelope of money from the receptionist, which contained "a large sum of money."

The girl had sexual encounters with Kelly about once a month for a year.

CASE 2

Initials: R.L.

Incident occurred between: Sept. 26, 1998, and Sept. 25, 2001

Kelly faces: 2 counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse

Additional details: Prosecutors have a video showing R. Kelly having sex with a girl who repeatedly says that she's 14 years old. They received the video from the attorney of a man who was asked to retrieve it after talking with R. Kelly and the singer's associates in 2001. The witness got the video, watched it and eventually turned it over to the

Other accusers included a girl who met Kelly at her 16th birthday party and a hairdresser who expected to braid the singer's hair only to find that he wanted oral sex instead, court documents said.

The accounts emerged Saturday as Kelly made his first court appearance since being



Kelly

accused of sexually abusing four people in a case that could produce another #MeToo reckoning for a celebrity.

A judge gave Kelly a chance to go free while awaiting trial, setting bond at

\$1 million. That means the 52-year-old Grammy winner must post \$100,000 to be released or remain behind

bars until he is tried on the allegations that date back as far as 1998 and span more than a decade.

The prosecution released four detailed documents—one for each accuser—outlining the basis for the charges.

The 16-year-old girl who attended Kelly's trial got his autograph after a court session. He later invited her to his home in the Chicago suburb of Olympia Fields, where

they had sex multiple times, according to the documents, which said he also slapped, choked and spit on her.

In 1998, another girl reported meeting Kelly at a restaurant where she was having a 16th birthday party. Kelly's manager gave her the singer's business card and suggested she call Kelly. The girl's mother heard the exchange, took the card and told the manager her daughter was 16.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Victoria Sablan Villagomez

MAY 29, 1949 - FEBRUARY 19, 2019

In her eternal rest she now joins her:

Parents: †Jose SN. /†Rosa Sablan

Parents In-Law: †Felix C. / †Cresensia B. Villagomez

God Parents: †Rosa Reyes & †Godfredo Aguon Sanchez

Brothers, Sisters & In-Laws: †Estafania SN./†Tobias Muna, †Francisca S./†Obed Celis, †Matilde S./†Jose Naputi, †Mariana S./†Luis Cabrera, †Magdalena S. Chinel, †Margarita S./†Joaquin Palacios, †Rosario S./†Antonio Santos, †Mariano SN. Sablan, †Rosa S./†Rudy Pangelinan, †Efrain Palacios, †Josephina S. Santos, †Consolacion S. Quitugua, †Bicente N. Sablan, †Josephine S. Omar, †Maria V./†David E. Pangelinan, †Abel Atalig, †Ramon Manahane, †Ricardo B. / †Verna M. Villagomez, †Freddy B. Villagomez, †Antonio DLG. Aldan, †Manuel D. Degracia, †Felix B. /†Eufracia C. Villagomez,

She will be missed and forever remembered in the hearts of her:

Husband: Jose Borja Villagomez

Children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren:

Jose S. Villagomez & Karmen O. Villagomez -Valerie G./Mitchell T. Duenas (Victoria, Kiarah, Lakisha, Vijae), Jose S. Villagomez Jr. II/ Tanya Baba (Jonaesha, Jose Jr. III), Joven G./Jaeleen R. Villagomez (Jazleen, Jaymian, Jayzeon, Jayveon, Aria, & Joven Jr), Shanise G./Augustin N. Castro Jr. (Zyler, Aulexise, Darren), Travis G. Villagomez/Dana Q. Terlaje, Tinesha G. Villagomez/Palmerson Mongkeya (Kaela Mae), Eugene O, Sarina, Mary Cepeda/Ben Castro (Brianna, Kiahni, Morgan, VJ), Christopher O./Carmania Caliwan (Iziah, CJ, Carter);

Charlotte V. & David Murray - Leslie & Julian Pangelinan (Blake, Aria, Mikayla), Brennan V. Aguado/Jasmine Hocog (Vicente, Leani, Dinna, Victoria) Justin V./Rit S. Aguado, Megan Murray, Joshua Murray;

Brenda V. & William M. Cepeda - BillyJack V. Quitugua (Neily, BillyJack Jr. Dillen, & Zackery), Shane V. Quitugua, Gerald Jordan V. Quitugua, Amanda A./Michael Sieger (Ayven Kade);

Mark S. & Amy Villagomez;

Donald S. Villagomez & Kathy Lizama - Shalene Casil, Shane Casil, & Shawn Casil;

Caroline V. & Ronnie Q. Castro - Brittney (Elora), Ronnie, Giovanni;

Felix S. & Christina DLC. Villagomez -Joshua, Josiah, Courtney, Dreyvan, & Ethan;

Sister: Milagro S. Palacios

Brothers & Sisters In-Law: Antonio B. & Rosa A. Villagomez, Marina V. Atalig, Bernadita V. Manahane, Engracia V. Aldan, Elizabeth V. & Robert DLG. Manalo, Jesus Ramon B. Villagomez, Lucia V. & Jose C. Sablan, Joaquin Santos

Oscars: Stars and stand-ins rehearse for the big show

LOS ANGELES (AP)—It is decidedly casual inside the Dolby Theatre the day before the Oscars.

Most people, celebrities included, are wearing jeans and sneakers, and in Brie Larson's case, a backpack, to practice presenting awards Saturday. Walking out with Javier Bardem, Angela Bassett looked comfortable in a matching blue Adidas track-suit and baseball hat to top it off. But look down at her feet and you might be a little surprised to see glittery silver high heels.

Yes, the atmosphere is relaxed, but for the female presenters, show-day footwear—or at least something that's a similar height—is recommended to get the camera shot locked in. And perhaps it's not a bad thing to get in a little practice striding across that long stage to the microphone before millions of people are watching Sunday night.

Stars turned out throughout Saturday to run through their categories to get a feel of what it will be like on show day. There's music, lights, nominee reels, an announcer and even an envelope with a winner, and a stand-in assigned to be said winner who walks up to the stage, from where that star will actually be sitting, and gives a full acceptance speech.



AP
Serena Williams appears during rehearsals for the 91st Academy Awards in Los Angeles on Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019.

larily animated, gesturing wildly and even teasing the winners walking up to the stage by putting the two Oscars up to his chest and saying, "Come and get it boys." Others had feedback. Pharrell Williams said he wished they'd go back to the white envelopes instead of the red ones.

Elsewhere in the theater, Keegan Michael-Key could be spotted getting rigged up for a stunt.

Even competing for attention with some of the biggest stars in showbiz, the stand-ins were sometimes the highlight of rehearsals, giving surprisingly wonderful (and well-researched) acceptance speeches for everything from best actor to best sound mixing.

One woman was especially excited to accept a certain award from the "dream team" of Tina Fey, Amy Poehler and Maya Rudolph, who had the busy production staff in stitches running through their bit. They all bowed to her as she came up to accept the plastic Oscar statuette.

"Crazy Rich Asians" star Constance Wu seemed nervous to read off of the card inside the envelope.

"Do I say it?" Wu asked.

A voice of god responded: "For this rehearsal only."

And as if to make certain that she wasn't accidentally announcing the winner of her category, Wu said "for this rehearsal only, the Oscar

goes to ..."

Most celebrity presenters are in and out in one take—Daniel Craig and Charlize Theron, Larson and her "Captain Marvel" co-star Samuel L. Jackson and Bassett and Bardem among them. But some want a second-go, like Dana Carvey, Mike Meyers and Serena Williams, all of whom are introducing various

best picture contenders.

Williams had a special guest with her on Saturday too: her daughter, Alexis Olympia, who held her mother's hand to waddle across the grand stage. For the actual rehearsal, the exceedingly well-behaved one-year-old was held in the wings while Williams read her lines from the teleprompter.

And some had more fun

Domestic workers gather to celebrate 'Roma' and the Oscars

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Doris Tapia never imagined that she would get to watch the Oscars at a party in Los Angeles, exchanging the sneakers she wears when she takes care of children in New York for a pair of high heel shoes.

The Peruvian nanny is among dozens of domestic workers who will be honored Sunday as the "heroes of our homes" in a red carpet event organized by the National Domestic Workers Alliance.

The event also has the support of "Roma" director Alfonso Cuarón, activist Tarana

Burke and actresses Diane Guerrero, Eva Longoria and Olga Segura.

"It is a privilege to be part of this event. I could have never imagined I would be stepping in a place like this," Tapia said in Spanish, shortly before her trip to Hollywood.

"And yesterday trying our dresses on! It was such a lovely experience of camaraderie," she added later about the garments donated by Rent the Runway.

The Mexican movie "Roma" is nominated for 10 Academy Awards and stars

Yalitza Aparicio as Cleo, a domestic worker for a Mexico City middle-class family in the turbulent early 1970s.

It has given domestic workers global visibility and started a conversation about the importance of their job after years of being poorly paid and underappreciated.

"There are 2 million women who do this work and are not protected by our labor laws," said Ai-jen Poo, executive director at the alliance, an organization founded in 2007 that promotes the rights of domestic workers in the United States.

"They are taking care of our families, but they can't take care of their own families doing this work," she said. "We think this is a huge opportunity to expand our support for making these jobs dignified jobs and for valuing" the workers.

Inspired by his childhood, Cuarón has dedicated "Roma" to his nanny Lobo. Since its August debut at the Venice Film Festival, where it earned the Golden Lion, it has received accolades and awards at the Golden Globes and the British film academy's BAFTAs, among others.

'Empire' producers cut Smollett from season's last episodes

CHICAGO — Actor Jussie Smollett's character on "Empire" will be removed from the final two episodes of this season in the wake of his arrest on charges that he staged a racist, anti-gay attack on himself last month in downtown Chicago, producers of the Fox TV show announced Friday.

The announcement came a day after Smollett turned himself in to police, appeared in court on a felony charge of disorderly conduct for allegedly filing a false police report, and left jail after posting bond.

"Empire" executive producers Lee Daniels, Danny Strong, Brett Mahoney, Brian Grazer, Sanaa Hamri, Francie Calfo and Dennis Hammer said in a written statement. "We are also aware of the effects of this process on the cast and crew members who work on our show and to avoid further disruption on set, we have decided to remove the role of 'Jamal' from the final two episodes of the season."

The series is on a midseason break and returns March

13 with nine episodes. The last two episodes of the fifth season were still being made when Smollett was charged. At this point, Smollett is part of the seven already completed episodes.

Smollett, who is black and gay, plays a gay character on the show that follows a black family as they navigate the ups and downs of the recording industry.

Police said Smollett planned the hoax because he was unhappy with his salary and wanted to promote his career. Before the attack, he also sent a letter that threatened him to the Chicago studio where

"Empire" is shot, police said.

As authorities laid out their case against Smollett, the narrative that emerged Thursday sounded like that of a filmmaker who wrote, cast, directed and starred in a short movie.

Prosecutors said Smollett gave detailed instructions to the accomplices who helped him stage the attack in January, including telling them specific slurs to yell, urging them to shout "MAGA country" and even pointing out a surveillance camera that he thought would record the beating.

with it than others, like Awkwafina (also in Adidas track pants) and John Mulaney.

"Um, we're going to go," Mulaney said after his second run-through and Awkwafina waved to a friendly face in the crowd.

James McAvoy was particu-

Stars reflect on awards season at last show before Oscars

SANTA MONICA, Calif.

(AP)—Glenn Close says she's still a bit surprised the motion picture academy gave a nod to her performance in "The Wife." Actor Richard E. Grant says he's certain he's going to lose and will never get this close to Oscar again. And screenwriter Barry Jenkins just wants to savor making it to the end of the awards-circuit road and enjoy being in the presence of his peers.

"We've all reached the end," explained Jenkins on the arrivals line at the Film Independent Spirit Awards Saturday, where his film "If Beale Street Could Talk" was named best feature. Jenkins' adapted screenplay is up for an Oscar Sunday.

The beachside show is a laid back precursor to the Academy Awards, offering one last chance to reflect on the Hollywood lengthy awards season.

"You know, I think we all kind of know more or less what the results are going to be and so you really legitimately start to celebrate your peers," Jenkins said.

"And I think you know you look across the room to see all these people—some of whom I've admired my en-

tire filmmaking life—to be in the same auditorium with them, to walk the same red carpet with them, and also to hear from them, what they think of my work and to let them know what I think of theirs. To me, that's what this season ultimately ends up becoming about."

Close's Academy Award-nominated performance in "The Wife," which also took home the Spirit, isn't so-called "Oscar bait"—something tailor-made to take home statuettes. Close said she's still a bit surprised The Academy took notice.

"I mean, it's a very quiet performance," she noted. "It's a very internal performance. And the fact that something that's so internal had such resonance with people, I still can conjure up how I felt when we first showed it at Toronto and I was astounded by the power that this movie had with the audience. And I've never lost that feeling of astonishment."

For "Minding the Gap" director Bing Liu, whose film is nominated in the feature documentary category, the recognition has repeatedly shown him the power of film.

Giant wooden troll is returning to Colorado ski town

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. (AP)—A huge wooden troll will be reincarnated in a Colorado ski town, although it's unclear what it will look like or where it will sit.

The Summit Daily reported Friday that Breckenridge officials have a deal with Danish artist Thomas Dambo to rebuild his troll

this spring. It was erected beside a trail last summer for a festival, but it was so popular that nearby homeowners complained about all the foot traffic. It was taken down in November.

The troll, named Isak Heartstone, was 15 feet (4.5 meters) high.

Parts were discarded or re-

cycled when it was removed, but some pieces were saved and will be used in the new version. Rebuilding is expected to take about a week sometime in May.

More discussions are planned to choose a location.

AP

In this Aug. 7, 2018, photo, a 15-foot-high troll sculpture is under construction along a trail in Breckenridge, Colo. It became so popular that nearby homeowners complained about all the foot traffic, so it was taken down in November. On Friday, Feb. 22, 2019, Breckenridge officials announced they had reached a deal with Danish artist Thomas Dambo to rebuild the troll this spring.



Prince Harry, wife Meghan in Morocco on official visit

CASABLANCA, Morocco (AP)—Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, have arrived in Morocco for an official trip scheduled to be their last international journey before she gives birth to their first child.

Meghan is seven months pregnant and is expected to have their child in April.

The royal couple's schedule begins Sunday in the town of Asni in the Atlas Mountains to hear about the

education of girls in rural communities.

They will then travel to Rabat to meet with diplomats, influential women, young entrepreneurs and disabled athletes.

The visit will also include a trip to the Moroccan Royal Federation of Equestrian Sports to observe horses that provide support to children with special needs.

Harry and Meghan plan to return to Britain Tuesday.

Cartoon museum acquires dozens of original Archie comics

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—The world's largest cartoon museum has announced the acquisition of dozens of complete original Archie Comics stories.

The work by the late artist Dan DeCarlo includes stories from Betty and Me, Betty & Veronica, Veronica, Sabrina the Teenage Witch, Josie and the Pussycats, Cheryl Blossom and Jughead.

Jenny Robb is head curator at Ohio State University's Billy Ireland Cartoon Library

& Museum. She says the characters are an important part of popular culture history and continue to resonate with audiences today.

The museum says most of the stories were printed in the 1980s and early 1990s, with some drawn by DeCarlo's twin sons Dan and James.

Before his work on Archie stories, Dan DeCarlo freelanced for several companies including Humorama magazines and worked on several comic books with Stan Lee.

However, on late Friday,

a Kim lookalike, the Hong Kong-based impersonator who uses the name Howard X, posted on Facebook that about 15 police or immigration officers demanded a mandatory "interview" with them following a talk they gave at the state-run VTC station.

"They then said that this was a very sensitive time in the city due to the Trump/Kim summit and that our impersonation was causing a 'disturbance' and ... suggested that we do not do the impersonation in

public for the duration of our stay as these presidents have many enemies and that it was for our own safety."

According to Howard X, there was a back-and-forth with an unnamed Vietnamese officer who "did not seem

pleased with my answer" and threatened the impersonators with deportation, saying they were breaking immigration rules. Finally, he said they were driven back to their hotel and told to stay put until authorities decide how to treat them.



U.S. President Donald Trump impersonator Russell White, left, and Kim Jong-un impersonator Howard X pose for photos outside the Opera House in Hanoi, Vietnam, Friday, Feb. 22, 2019.

"Although I am not surprised that I got detained for doing my impersonation in Vietnam, it's still pretty annoying. What it shows is that Vietnam has a long way to go before they will be a developed country and I wonder if they ever will under these conditions," he wrote on his Facebook page. "If the Vietnamese authorities are willing to give this kind of harassment over something as trivial as an impersonation to a high profile foreigner, imagine what all the Vietnamese artists, musicians, film producers and all the political activists have to endure for simply wanting to release a controversial film, songs or for simply speaking up about real injustices in this country."

Vietnam is a tightly controlled communist country that tolerates no dissent.

Woman admired for beauty wants men to look deeper

DEAR ABBY: I have been reading your advice and your mother's for decades. I am an attractive 65-year-old woman. I have no problem meeting men. I have been told numerous times I look 20 years younger than my age.

The problem is, if I hear another man tell me how beautiful I am, I may go ballistic. I want a man to appreciate me for my intellect and my personality.

I thought when I was past 50 I would no longer have to hear about my looks. I want a man to appreciate the person I am inside, not outside. I don't wear makeup, and I don't dress up. What does an old lady do to get a man to appreciate her for her brain and not her looks?

ANNNOYED IN FLORIDA

DEAR ANNOYED: Please cut these poor would-be suitors some slack. Until they get to know the person you are inside, what else would you expect them to say to ingratiate themselves? You have been blessed with good looks, an asset most women would welcome. Stop complaining and appreciate what you have. If you do, you will be an even more beautiful woman inside.

DEAR ABBY: My wife and I are having a debate: A married woman is out of town by herself and meets a man two nights in a row for drinks. Over the next few months she talks to him several times on the phone, and then one night he calls

her at 9:30, after she is already in bed, and tells her he's in town. So she gets up, gets dressed (drop-dead gorgeous), takes off and meets him. She sits in his truck for an hour, kissing and hugging, no sex or intimate touching. All of this is without her husband's knowledge. Did this woman have an affair?

JUST CURIOUS IN GEORGIA

DEAR JUST CURIOUS: YEP! And it may have started when she met him when she was out of town. Even if there was no sex act, plenty of intimate physical contact WAS happening—and that's what I'd classify as infidelity.

DEAR ABBY: Regarding the letter from "Disgruntled Grandparent" (Dec. 11), whose daughter insisted on always being present when her children were with her mother and father, I have a theory.

My sister would always be present when her children were with our parents. This was because my father had sexually abused her and the rest of us when we were children. She didn't want the same to happen to her children, but also didn't want to deprive them of knowing their grandparents, so that's how she managed it.

Grandma may not know, or understand if she does know, but I'm guessing the daughter is making sure she's present for similar reasons. She wants to ensure it doesn't happen to her kids while continuing to let them interact. These sorts of family dynamics are not black and white, so you manage as best you can with people who you inexplicably still love (or love part of

DEAR ABBY

**By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE**

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



them) but who can't be trusted not to cause great harm.

I recognized that strategy as identical to my sister's, so thought I ought to flag that possible explanation for you.

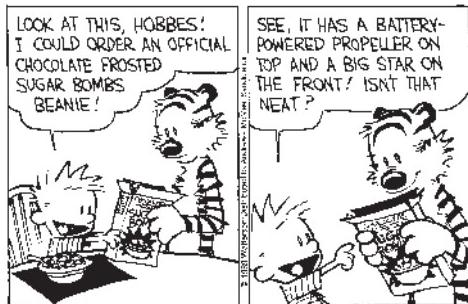
ABBY READER IN NEW ZEALAND

DEAR READER: That makes perfect sense, and thank you for writing. "Disgruntled's" letter received a large response and an overwhelming majority of those who wrote suggested a similar scenario. My heart goes out to you for what you and your siblings experienced as children. I hope you were able to get help and support in dealing with the abuse you suffered.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

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The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

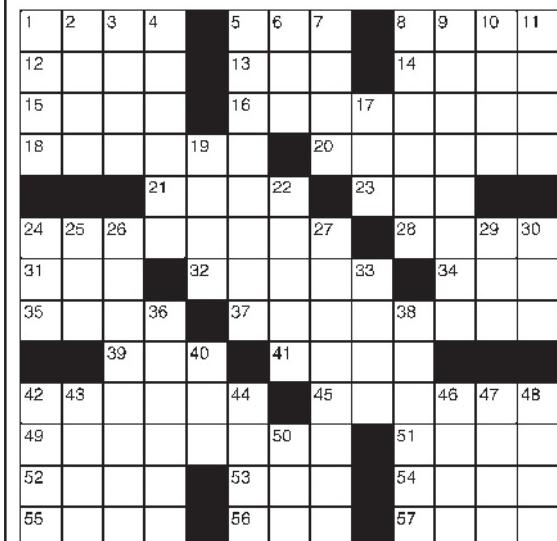


CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

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28	Whirled			22	Ranch		
31	Hosp.			23	visitor		
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Last Friday's Answer 02-25



For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5956 99¢ per minute, touchtone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5956 99¢ per minute, touchtone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY:

Molly Ringwald, 51; Matt Dillon, 55; John Travolta, 65; Yoko Ono, 86.

Happy Birthday: Make changes for the right reason. Consider what will benefit you the most. Look for opportunities that will encourage you to update and use your skills to fit a trend or job market. Spice up your resume and find a way to branch out. Expand your circle of friends, your knowledge and your experience. Your numbers are 4, 9, 22, 29, 30, 37, 46.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Take one step at a time. If you act on an assumption, you will have regrets. Getting along and seeing the positive in whatever situation you face will be liberating. Accept the inevitable, and work with what you've got. ☀☀☀

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Lay down some ground rules, and pick up the pace. Make a unique contribution to change someone's life. Love, romance and personal improvements will bring you joy and set you on a path that will add to your security. ☀☀☀

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't trust what someone tells you; believe in yourself, what you know to be factual and what you are capable of doing. It's OK to think big, but when it comes to putting your plans in motion, practicality should be enforced. ☀☀☀

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Use your imagination, surprise someone you love and focus on what's important to you. Partnerships deserve more attention, and dis-

cussing your intentions and plans will bring you closer to the person you want to spend time with most. ☀☀☀

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You need a boost. It's time to get moving and to get things done. Change begins when you've mastered your skills and you have the confidence to use them in your own special way. Don't ponder over what to do next. ☀☀☀

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take a critical look at yourself, your life and your prospects. Do something that will turn your dream into a reality. Look inward and strive for personal growth and obtaining the knowledge required to be successful. ☀☀☀

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Look beyond your situation and consider how best to maintain balance and peace in your life and still be able to achieve your goals. Reflect on what's happened in the past, and avoid making the same mistakes. ☀☀☀

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Use your imagination and originality. How you separate what you have to offer from others will invite opportunities with people who are open to doing things differently. Don't let emotions alter the choices you make. ☀☀

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Concentrate on personal goals and changes that will give you the edge in a competitive situation. Understanding what others want and are willing to do will help you direct your energy wisely. Recognize who is truthful. ☀☀☀

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Use your imagination, surprise someone you love and focus on what's important to you. Partnerships deserve more attention, and dis-

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COURTESY 2007
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): It's OK to show emotions and to tell someone how you feel. Speak up; you will be able to bring about a change that will make your life better. Emotional anger will not help you find a solution. ☀☀☀

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Keep busy and accomplish as much as possible. The less time you waste explaining yourself and the more time spent being productive, the better. Pull in the people you know can do a good job without supervision. ☀☀

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Stand up and help those less fortunate. Being fair and nonjudgmental will lead to greater recognition and opportunities. A personal change will prepare you for an offer that is too good to turn down. Networking will pay off. ☀☀☀

Birthday Baby: You are enthusiastic, adaptable and friendly. You are ambitious and studious.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

8	2	4		7				
5	2			4	3			
9			8	6				
6					9			
3	1	2			7			
4			6					
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6	5		7	4	3			
4		9	7	3				

Difficulty Level ★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

1	7	2	9	5	4	3	8	6
8	5	9	1	6	3	7	2	4
3	4	6	8	2	7	5	9	1
9	2	7	5	8	6	4	1	3
5	3	4	7	1	9	8	6	2
6	1	8	4	3	2	9		

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Additional requirements: All applicants must be of good health with good moral character. Must be able to follow grooming standards; provide current health certificate. Must have reliable transportation and willing to undergo drug test.

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(In-House Promotion)

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TIME: 10:00 A.M.

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary:
2019-001	Planner	\$31,757.68 to \$35,012.57- per annum (Classified Position)

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information may be picked up, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

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For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447/6866 or by email to jjmuna@nmhc.gov.mp. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, funder and employer.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

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- Install and repair of Chilled Water Systems
- Perform repair and trouble analysis of VAV and VVT Control Systems
- Perform Computer-based Control System

Other requirements:

- Minimum 5-year work experience required
- EPA Section 608 (Preferable)
- Maintenance Technician & Electrical Safety Course in accordance with 29CFR 1910 Standard (Preferable)
- Must possess good communication skill

One (1) HEAD TECHNICIAN-AIR CONDITIONING & REFRIGERATION

- Read and interpret blueprints, technical drawings, schematics and computer-generated reports
- Establish and coordinate maintenance and safety procedures, service schedule and supply of materials required to maintain equipment
- Oversee installation, operation, maintenance and repair to ensure equipment are functioning according to specifications
- Install, service and repair of Central Air-Conditioning, Refrigeration and Ventilation Systems
- Repair and service of Chilled Water Air-Conditioning System
- Perform repair and trouble analysis of VAV and VVT Control Systems
- Perform Computer based Control System

Other requirements:

- Minimum 5-year work experience required
- 4-year Bachelor of Science degree from reputable College or University
- Must possess good communication skill

One (1) SHEET METAL WORKER

- Fabricate and install sheet metal & fiberglass products & equipment such as ducts, control boxes, drain pipes & furnace casings
- Set-up and operate fabricating equipment and machines, soldering and welding equipment
- Must be knowledgeable in interpreting plans and specifications
- Preferably knowledgeable in duct size calculation
- Minimum 5-year work experience required
- Must possess good communication skill

One (1) HVAC/R SALES REPRESENTATIVE

- Knowledgeable of HVAC-R Equipment and Parts sale
- Knowledgeable of product selection, listing of order and inventory
- Must be proficient on Computer Software such as Sage 50 Accounting System, MS Excel and MS Word
- Minimum 5-year work experience required
- Must possess good communication skill

E-mail resume to chongs@pticom.com

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Scherzer: Pitch clock messes with ‘fabric’ of baseball

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)—If three-time Cy Young Award winner Max Scherzer has his way, Major League Baseball’s pitch clock will die in the South Florida humidity.

“I know as players that’s something that MLB is trying to negotiate,” the Washington Nationals ace said Saturday night. “I don’t think there’s negotiation here. As players, it just shouldn’t be in the game. Having a pitch clock, if you have ball-strike implications, that’s messing with the fabric of the game. There’s no clock in baseball and there’s no clock in baseball for a reason.”

After pushing for an agreement with players last season, management decided on its own to experiment with a 20-second pitch clock during spring training this year, part of the sport’s effort to speed the pace of play. Owners have the right to implement the clock for the regular season but would prefer to reach an agreement with the union.

Under the phase-in designed to allow teams to get used to the concept without fear of penalty, pitchers and batters who were taking too long in Saturday’s games were merely warned to hurry up.

When the policy, which has been used in some minor leagues since 2015, is phased in, a ball could be charged in certain situations to pitchers who do not begin their motion in time. Batters delaying the game might draw a strike.

Washington played its Grapefruit League opener Saturday night against Houston. Scherzer came close to using the full 20 seconds on a couple of occasions with runners on base, but the clock didn’t expire.

The Ballpark of the Palm Beaches features a pitch clock beneath the main outfield scoreboard and two at ground level behind home plate near each dugout.

“Now having to actually throw to it, I think it’s more of a distraction than anything,” Scherzer said. “I get that there are parts of the game that we can clean up and I think that there can be meaningful changes. I’m fundamentally against this.”

A newly elected member of the Major League Baseball Players Association’s executive board, Scherzer felt his first outing dragging a bit, attributing the slow play to a high amount of foul balls. He referenced an article published a few days ago by FiveThirtyEight citing an increase in foul balls as being a major reason for longer games.

“I’m not going to put my name next to this clock,” he said.



New York Yankees pitcher Cale Coshow throws as the pitching clock winds down during a spring training baseball game against the Boston Red Sox in Fort Myers, Fla., Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019. AP

the middle, that’s what it goes back to,” Scherzer said. “I’ve got to get that fastball to the edge.”

Slowly, pitch clock rolled out in spring training

Sixteen games across Florida and Arizona were played under the new rules, which were being phased in without threat of penalty for the first few days or more. There were no notable incidents in the afternoon, when three of the six games approached or surpassed 3 hours.

“I hope it gets the tempo up,” Marlins manager Don Mattingly said after the St. Louis Cardinals beat Miami 11-1 in 3 hours, 15 minutes. “It sounds like at the minor league level they get used to it, and that’s the way you go.”

Baseball has long billed itself as a timeless sport, but as average game times crept over 3 hours that has become less a badge of honor and more a reason for some young or short-attention-span fans to turn to other forms of entertainment.

Since taking over as commissioner, Rob Manfred has made speeding up games one of his primary goals. Last year, the average length of a nine-inning game fell to 3 hours—five minutes shorter than the previous season, but still 36 minutes longer than a typical game in 1976.

Los Angeles Dodgers veteran Rich Hill threw seven pitches in the first inning and retired the Chicago White Sox in order.

“I didn’t notice the pitch clock,” he said. “I’m against it, but I think it’s just really a fundamental thing for me. That’s it, period. It’s there, great, maybe we can be aware of it. But if it’s going to dictate the outcome of the game, I would hope everybody who loves the game and watches baseball would be against it for that reason only.”

“If it’s out there and it’s, ‘Hey, we have to pick it up, we’re using the clock to use as a warning or a guideline,’ that would be fine. But I didn’t really notice the clock. I usually pitch with pretty decent pace anyways,” he said.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, who has two of the slowest pitchers in the game in Joe Kelly and Pedro Baez, said he thinks they will figure it out.

Yankees on Machado: You can't have them all'

TAMPA, Fla.—Out in Arizona, Manny Machado was being formally introduced by the San Diego Padres.

Meanwhile at Steinbrenner Field, New York Yankees general manager Brian Cashman was pledging faith in his 2019 roster and remembering what he’d say to George Steinbrenner on such occasions.

“I used to tell the Boss back in the day, ‘You can’t have ‘em all,’” Cashman said.

It’s hard to imagine the late Yankees owner acting passively in such a free-agent market, watching superstars like Machado or Bryce Harper signing elsewhere.

“George had trouble with that 25-man roster being limited to 25,” said Cashman, who’d have to remind the Boss of that reality during “our knockdown, drag-out” conversations about star players that didn’t fit—either roster-wise or value-wise.

Ultimately, the Yankees passed on Machado for a combination of reasons that included the \$300 million, 10-year commitment he received from San Diego.

By spreading cash mainly toward pitching needs, “we feel good about what we did this winter,” Cashman said.

Scherzer allowed one run in two innings. He struck out three and walked one while throwing 25 of 44 pitches for

strikes.

The home run by Marisnick to straightaway center field led

off the game and came on a 2-2 fastball.

“It’s a fastball right down

agent Bryce Harper. Nationals principal owner Mark Lerner said he hasn’t heard from Harper’s agent Scott Boras in months and couldn’t wait any longer for a decision.

“Nothing’s certainly changed on our end,” Lerner said. “We’ve moved on. As I said back then and we had to. There was no way we could wait around. Bryce, I’m sure will make his decision hopefully in the next few days, but we’ve filled out our roster and like I said, we wish him nothing but the best.”

According to Cashman,

money was not discussed during the get-to-know-you dinner in Manhattan with Machado,

his wife, Yankees executives

and manager Aaron Boone.

“Anyone would have an interest in (him). He’s Manny Machado,” said Cashman, calling it “a really good meet and greet.”

But the next time Machado appears at Yankee Stadium, he’ll be wearing a road Padres uniform during a May 27-29 interleague series.

“It’s not like on Nov. 1, you say, ‘This is what we’re going to do’ and it all works out that way,” Cashman said. “It’s an ever-flowing, changing process.”

Nationals moved on from Harper

The Washington Nationals have “moved on” from free

agent Bryce Harper. Nationals principal owner Mark Lerner said he hasn’t heard from Harper’s agent Scott Boras in months and couldn’t wait any longer for a decision.

“Nothing’s certainly changed on our end,” Lerner said. “We’ve moved on. As I said back then and we had to. There was no way we could wait around. Bryce, I’m sure will make his decision hopefully in the next few days, but we’ve filled out our roster and like I said, we wish him nothing but the best.”

While Lerner hasn’t shut the door completely on potentially re-signing Harper, it’s less likely considering the lack of discussion.

“But there’s always that, the door’s cracked a little bit,” he said. “I have no clue at this point what they’re up to. We really haven’t heard from them in a couple months.”

Harper has been rumored to be headed to the Philadelphia Phillies, however the San Francisco Giants—and even the San Diego Padres—remain in contention.

In November, it was reported that Harper rejected a 10-year, \$300 million offer from the Nationals, where he spent the last seven years.

Padres eyeing Keuchel?

Reports have it that ongoing talks between agent Scott Boras and the Padres have focused more on starting pitcher Dallas Keuchel than Harper. Earlier this week, there were conflicting reports on the Padres’ level of interest in Harper, but any agreement between the two is looking unlikelier by the day.

As for Keuchel, the potential deal is still a “long-shot,” especially as the team has other, cheaper options in mind. The 31-year-old southpaw turned down a qualifying offer from the Astros last year and is likely angling for something north of the five-year, \$90 million contract extension he rejected from the club in 2016. He’s coming off of another solid performance in Houston, where he went 12-11 in 34 starts with a 3.74 ERA, 2.6 BB/9, 6.7 SO/9, and 3.6 fWAR through 204 2/3 innings in 2018.

While Keuchel has failed to garner substantial interest around the league this off-season, the Phillies are looking to establish themselves as frontrunners for the lefty—and they’re far less likely to have hang-ups about his asking price, too.

Goodell has wide-ranging powers to fine or suspend Kraft

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell has wide-ranging powers to discipline teams, coaches, players, and, yes, owners.

Pending the completion of police investigations in Florida—and likely a league inquiry as well—Goodell could punish New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft for being charged with two counts of soliciting a prostitute.

The 77-year-old Kraft was twice videotaped in a sex act at a shopping-center massage parlor in Florida, police said Friday. The charges come amid a crackdown on sex trafficking in which hundreds of arrest warrants have been issued.

Under the NFL's personal conduct policy that states "ownership and club or league management have traditionally been held to a higher standard and will be subject to more significant discipline," Goodell could fine and/or suspend Kraft from any activities involving the Super Bowl champions.

"It is not enough simply to avoid being found guilty of a crime," the policy says. "We are all held to a higher standard and must conduct ourselves in a way that is responsible, promotes the values of the NFL, and is lawful."

Kraft has been accused of misdemeanor charges and might not be required to perform more than community service and attend a course on the harmful effects of prostitution and sex trafficking. Goodell will be judging whether this was "conduct detrimental to the integrity of and public confidence in" the NFL.

He's made many such judgments before—including fining Kraft and the Patriots \$250,000 in 2007 for filming other teams' signals, and \$1 million in 2014 for deflating footballs during the AFC title game. The "Deflategate" case damaged Goodell's close relationship



In this Nov. 19, 2017, file photo, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, right, talks with New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft before the Patriots face the Oakland Raiders in an NFL football game in Mexico City. AP

3 have reached out to Steelers on Brown trade

PITTSBURGH—As both the Pittsburgh Steelers and wide receiver Antonio Brown prepare for a potential separation from one another, general manager Kevin Colbert said there's no shortage of interest in the four-time all-pro.

In an interview Friday, Colbert said he had already received inquiries from three other teams about a possible trade for Brown.

"We've had, I'd say, three teams that have touched base with us and we'll see how that grows," Colbert said Friday on NFL Network's "Up

To the Minute Live." "I think that'll unfold over these next few weeks as teams get better perspective of what else there is available to them."

On Tuesday, Brown wrote on Twitter that he and team owner Art Rooney II had a productive meeting in which both sides agreed it was time to "move on." In an Instagram Live video, he also said, "If your squad want to win and your squad want a hungry wide receiver who's the best in the whole world, someone hit my phone."

Brown, 30, led the NFL with 15 touchdown catches

in 2018 but was inactive for the Steelers' Week 17 contest against the Cincinnati Bengals after he missed multiple practices and meetings leading up to the game.

Brown is due a \$2.5 million roster bonus on March 17, and next week's NFL scouting combine could provide the team with the opportunity to push along a potential trade. But Colbert reiterated on Friday that the team would not send Brown off at a discount or otherwise move him in a transaction that would not be fully in the team's best interest.

"We're looking at maybe not having this significant player, one of the best football players, not only on our team but in the National Football League," Colbert said. "So of course if you're going to subtract that player from your team, you better have compensation that justifies that. And that's what we're seeking. "It's really an evolutionary process. We don't know how long it could take. We're open to it. Again, if it doesn't benefit us, we won't do it. And that's as simple as it gets."

with Kraft, one of his trusted advisers on many NFL matters, including labor and broadcast rights.

Even though Goodell is employed by the owners, at a cost of about \$40 million annually in salary and bonuses,

he views the commissioner's role as one protective of the game and the league. If you embarrass "the shield," you are punished.

So he doesn't often hesitate to discipline wayward owners, basically penalizing

his bosses.

Only one of them, the Indianapolis Colts' Jim Irsay, has been suspended by Goodell, who replaced Paul Tagliabue as commissioner in 2006. Irsay acknowledged having a pain-

killer addiction in 2002 and sought treatment. The DEA investigated, but local prosecutors did not file charges.

Then, in March 2014, Irsay was arrested near his home in suburban Carmel and was held overnight after he failed

sobriety tests and police found prescription medications in his car. The police said the drugs were not associated with any of the prescription bottles found inside.

He was charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated, along with four felony counts of possession of a controlled substance; police also found \$29,009 in cash. He again sought treatment and in September 2014 pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor count of driving while intoxicated, agreeing to undergo drug testing for a year. Irsay also acknowledged he was under the influence of the painkillers oxycodone and hydrocodone when he was arrested.

Irsay drew a six-game suspension and \$500,000 fine from Goodell.

Last year, Jerry Richardson essentially was forced to sell the Carolina Panthers after allegations surfaced of his sexual and racial misconduct in the workplace. Following a six-month investigation by the league, he was fined \$2.7 million by Goodell. Richardson, like Kraft, was a confidant of Goodell's on league business matters.

In 2012, following a long investigation into the New Orleans Saints' bounties system, Goodell fined Saints owner Tom Benson \$500,000 and stripped the team of second-round draft picks in 2012 and 2013. But that was for an on-field issue—as was Kraft's fine for deflated footballs.

The current Kraft case, of course, has nothing to do with NFL play. It has plenty to do with Goodell's use of his disciplinary powers, and there will be a spotlight shining brightly on whatever decisions he makes.

Despite FIFA ban, Chelsea can still sign Pulisic

sea this January for a fee of \$73 million, and is scheduled to join the club this summer.

Chelsea was found guilty of violating FIFA rules regarding the signing of underage players.

This was a rule introduced last year, but Rule 19.1 of FIFA's transfer rules states clearly "International transfers of players are only permitted if the player is over the age of 18." There are exceptions if parents move to a country for non-soccer reasons

or have citizenship there, but



international signings of minors is no longer supposed to be allowed.

Chelsea can not buy or sign new players until the summer of 2020. They can, however, release players or bring back players that are out on loan.

This could prove huge for Chelsea, as the club has made a habit of signing young players and sending them out on loan, and there is plenty of talent that they own play-

ing elsewhere they can bring back into the fold to add depth to their roster. This includes USMNT defender Matt Miazga, who is currently out on loan at Reading.

Chelsea can appeal this decision as well, though it's not clear yet if they will.

Can they still sign Pulisic?

Yes. The transfer of Pulisic is a done deal. Right now he is technically owned by Chelsea and is being loaned back to

ing to loan players out or sell them off. This cutthroat approach has yielded good results with some players, but also resulted in a world where Chelsea once had Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku, Mohamed Salah, and Felipe Luis all on the books, among many other big name players, and decided all were surplus to requirements.

That's a staggering amount of talent to no longer have.

With a transfer ban, Chelsea might just have to give Pulisic the time to adjust to the Premier League and find his stride.

Pelicans stunt Lakers' playoff push without Davis



NEW ORLEANS (AP)—The boos showering the court when LeBron James handled the basketball left little doubt that fans in New Orleans suspect the Lakers star had something to do with why the Pelicans are cutting playing time for healthy All-Star Anthony Davis—and sitting him out entirely when possible.

James, however, was far more concerned about the performance of his own teammates.

Jrue Holiday hit five 3-pointers and scored 27 points while Davis watched from the bench in street clothes, and the Pelicans beat the Lakers 128-115 on Saturday night to stunt Los Angeles' playoff push.

"That urgency has to be there and we dug ourselves a hole," said James, whose Lakers are 3½ games out of a playoff spot in the Western Conference.

"It's how you approach the game every day, how you think the game every day. It's how you play the game, prepare for the game. It's not even like when you get to the arena. It's like way before that," James added. "It's the most important thing in your life at this time."

Brandon Ingram scored 29 points for Los Angeles, but the Lakers struggled throughout to keep pace with the Pelicans, who led most of the game and by as many as 20 points.

Former Lakers forward Julius Randle had 24 points for the Pelicans.

"It's not personal because there are players and coaches over there that I have a great relationship with, but to get a win against old teammates is always cool," Randle said.

Jazz 125, Mavericks 109

In Salt Lake City, Ricky Rubio and Donovan Mitchell each scored 25 points to lead the Utah Jazz to a victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

Jae Crowder chipped in 22 points off the bench and Joe Ingles added 18 for the Jazz. Rudy Gobert added 15 points and 11 rebounds.

Utah didn't trail after the first quarter after taking control on both ends of the court. The Jazz shot 48 percent from the field and finished with a 53-42 advantage on rebounds.

Kings 119, Thunder 116

In Sacramento, the Kings finally got that big win they've been looking for.

After two-point losses to the Golden State Warriors and the Denver Nuggets—the top two



AP New Orleans Pelicans guard Jrue Holiday (11) shoots against Los Angeles Lakers center JaVale McGee (7) in the second half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans, La. Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019.

a decisive 16-2 run capped by Nikola Mirotic's driving layup and two free throws from Middleton that gave Milwaukee a 129-115 advantage with 4:58 to play. Minnesota never threatened after that as the Bucks dialed up their energy and improved to 25-5 at home.

Bulls 126, Celtics 116

In Chicago, the last time they played Boston, the Chicago Bulls walked off the court with the most lopsided loss in franchise history and little signs of hope.

Consider this quite a change.

Lowering draft age from 19 to 18 proposed

The NBA has submitted to the National Basketball Players Association a formal proposal that will lower the draft-eligible age to 18 from 19, a person with knowledge of the proposal said.

The person requested anonymity because he was not authorized to publicly discuss discussions between the league and the union.

The NBPA and its executive director, Michele Roberts, planned to review the proposal Monday at a post-All-Star weekend meeting in the Bahamas.

The league and union have had informal discussions about lowering the age limit, and NBA commissioner Adam Silver is on record saying the current 19-year-old age limit is not working for the league or college basketball.

This is the first step in formal negotiations to lower the age limit by the 2022 draft. The issue is collectively bargained between the NBA and NBPA, and both sides need to agree to any rule change.

The timing of the proposal is coincidental in relation to Duke star Zion Williamson's injury, but his injury re-ignited the debate about one-and-done college players who may otherwise enter the draft after high school rather than spending a season in college and bypassing millions of dollars.

At the July NBA owners' meeting, Silver told reporters: "My personal view is that we're ready to make that change. ... When I've weighed the pros and cons, given that Condoleezza Rice and her Commission (On

Zach LaVine scored a career-high 42 points, Lauri Markkanen finished with a personal-best 35 points and 15 rebounds, and the Bulls got some payback with a victory over the Celtics.

"That's in the past, a couple of months ago," Markkanen said. "We had it in the back of our minds. We didn't talk about it too much. The coaches didn't say anything about it."

LaVine and Markkanen became the first Chicago teammates to score 35 or more in the same game since Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen each had 37 points at Phoenix on Nov. 20, 1996.

LaVine surpassed his previous high of 41 at New York on Nov. 5. Markkanen, whose best coming in was 33 against the Knicks last season, became the fourth Chicago player in 10 years to score 20 or more in

teams in the Western Conference—in their previous two games, the Kings were left frustrated.

Sacramento broke through against third-place Oklahoma City as Buddy Hield scored 34 points to help the Kings beat the Thunder.

"A game ago, it's, 'Oh my gosh, we're so close,'" Kings coach Dave Joerger said. "We had the Warriors. We feel like we had the Warriors, and then they got away. So it's a little bit of relief, also."

Hield, who played college ball at the nearby University of Oklahoma, shot 12 for 22 from the field. He said holding on for the win was a big deal because of Oklahoma City's Paul George and Russell Westbrook.

The concern was unfounded Saturday.

Ish Smith scored 22 points off the bench, fellow backup Langston Galloway added 15 points in the first five minutes of the fourth quarter to almost single-handedly turn a close game into a rout and the Pistons moved into seventh place in the Eastern Conference by downing the Miami Heat.

Detroit's bench outscored

Miami's 66-35.

"Guys responded," Casey said. "Now it's the consistency part. We are on a journey. We can't relax."

Blake Griffin had 20 points while Galloway and Luke Kennard each scored 17 for the Pistons (28-30), who are 1 1/2 games behind Brooklyn for the No. 6 spot.

Bucks 140, Timberwolves 128

In Milwaukee, Khris Middleton scored 28 points, Giannis Antetokounmpo had 27 points and 10 rebounds, and the NBA-leading Bucks pulled away for a victory over the short-handed Minnesota Timberwolves.

The Bucks (45-14) have won 10 of 11 and 16 of 18 to move a season-high 31 games over .500. With their latest win, they surpassed last season's victory total.

Derrick Rose had 23 points for the Timberwolves, who played without Karl-Anthony Towns for the second consecutive game.

After the score was tied at 113, the Bucks finally pulled away in the fourth quarter with

Why the 2022 draft? The league wants to give teams ample time to prepare for the change, and with the NBA submitting a proposal to the union now, it's clear it would prefer to reach an agreement, or at least a framework of the deal, in the next few months.

As is the case in CBA negotiations, obstacles remain. ESPN reported in October that the NBA wanted agents to provide medical reports on players and mandate attendance and some participation in the draft combine. That would give teams more information to make better selections in the draft. There is some pushback from agents to divulge information, but teams may not be willing to draft a player out of high school without a physical.

But the union is not opposed to lowering the age limit, and in July, NBPA executive director Michele Roberts told reporters, "Stay tuned ... I suspect that we'll have some news in the next few months."

Both sides seem willing to get a deal done, and there is confidence it will get done. Even though the CBA doesn't expire until the end of the 2023-24 season, both sides can agree to amend rules before then.

Johnson ahead; Four-putt spells disaster for Tiger

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Dustin Johnson was cruising along Saturday in the Mexico Championship until one swing put him in a bad spot, and the next shot made it even worse.

One minute he was leading by six shots. Two holes later, he was leading by two.

For all that went wrong, Johnson knew everything was right with his game. There was no need to panic, and he didn't.

Johnson responded from his double bogey on the 10th hole with two straight birdies. He made two more birdies sandwiched around an up-and-down par from 105 yards, and he wound up with a 5-under 66 that gave him a four-shot lead over Rory McIlroy going into the final round of the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship.

"I knew I was playing well, so I didn't really let it bother me," Johnson said. "I felt like I was swinging good and I



knew I could make quite a few birdies coming in. So it was one of those things where it was unfortunate, but I felt like I kept my focus and played really solid coming in."

The 10th hole was his first score worse than par at Chapultepec Golf Club this week.

And it was his last of the day.

McIlroy, suddenly back in the game, could not get any closer and had to settle for a 68.

"It's going to be tough, especially against D.J., who is arguably the best player in the world," McIlroy said. "So I'm going to have to go out there and just play a good round of golf, and hopefully that's good enough."

Johnson was at 16-under 197. No one else was closer than seven shots of the lead.

Meanwhile, Tiger Woods was five shots out of first place as he stood in the middle of the par-5 15th hole at Club de Golf Chapultepec.



Tiger Woods hits from a sand trap during the third round of competition of the WGC-Mexico Championship at the Chapultepec Golf Club in Mexico City, Saturday, Feb. 23, 2019.

only double bogey on the easiest hole on the course."

It was the 12th four-putt in Woods' career and just his third four-putt on the PGA Tour in 13 years.

On the next hole, he three-putted from 40 feet—his

fourth three-putt of the week.

And for just the second time since the start of the 2018 season, Woods refused to talk to the media after the round.

"What are you going to say?" said Joe LaCava, his caddie.

Ironically, Woods made a 7-footer for birdie to end his round. Unfortunately, it was his 35th putt of the round. He signed for a 1-under-par 70 that left him at 6 under through 54 holes and 10 shots behind Johnson.

TAN

From Page 28

all those hours spent training has finally paid off," said the Saipan International School student, who is regular figure along Beach Road, logging a lot of miles a week after completing her daily classes in their As Lito campus.

The 17-year-old was named top student athlete for 2018 after dominating local races and also representing the CNMI in regional tournaments, including the cross country events in Australia and Guam with the one in the Land Down Under testing her limits.

"The most challenging competition was probably the Australian Cross Country Championships in August in the Sunshine Coast, Australia, because the course was super tough. There were so many steep hills throughout the course and it is even considered 'the hardest course in all of Australia'. The athletes running in the competition were also very tough to beat/compete against, as they are the best in Australia (they even competed in Youth Olympic Games and World Championships all over the world)," said Tan, who also plays in tennis competitions on island.

The Commonwealth bet competed in the 4-kilometer race in Australia and timed in at 20:56 to be on the finishers list that had nearly 2,000 runners. Then less than two months after the event in Australia, she left the island again to don the CNMI colors in the Asia Pacific Invitational Cross Country Championships in Guam.

"She was the most memorable competition because I got to travel with some of my best friends and lead our team to a third place finish overall. I also placed in the Top 15 All-Island team out of 100 girls (first in the NMI, too), so that event is also very memorable to me," said Tan.

While Tan received the top athlete award for the first time, Schorr got his third and this one was extra special because of all the experiences he has gone through when competing and improving his game.

"I'm super happy to win

again and this will help strive me to keep working hard in the future. I guess as the years go by and having more experience and background in the sport, winning awards start becoming more meaningful," the SIS student said.

Schorr got NMSA members' nod for the prestigious award after taking the No. 1 ranking (boys U16 age group) in the entire Pacific, his several victories in local tournaments, and his stint in regional tournaments as a member of the CNMI Junior National Team and the Pacific Oceania Junior Davis Cup Team.

This summer, the 16-year-old will answer another call of duty when he suits up for the Commonwealth squad in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.

"I just want to do good in the Pacific Games in July and represent our islands the best I can," said Schorr.

SIS congratulates students

Meanwhile, SIS has all praises to their two talented student-athletes

"SIS is very proud of both Robbie and Tania. Their commitment and dedication to their respective sports is nothing short of astounding. Robbie has made many sacrifices over the years in order to attend international competitions during school time, but he has never shirked his academic duties nor shied away from the difficulties of being a scholar athlete," SIS headmaster Ron Snyder said.

"As Tania's coach, I am doubly proud of her. When she started cross country three years ago, she was No. 3 on the team but her dedication both during the season and off season quickly transformed her into the top runner on our team, the top female mid-distance runner in the CNMI and one of the overall best distance runners at any age. I have been honored to coach Tania in two Asia Pacific Cross Country Invitations and one Oceania Championship in Australia. She is an amazing athlete, the top scholar in her class, and a wonderful human being," he added.

SHEIKH

From Page 28

and heavy downpour here since last Saturday. Sheikh Salman was scheduled to come to Saipan via Japan where several flights have also been canceled

since last Saturday.

"Sheikh Salman has expressed his disappointment, as he and the rest of the AFC delegation could not visit us at this time. He vowed to visit us in the near future," Tan said. "We wish Sheikh Salman and

the other AFC officials safe travels, as they head back home and thank them for scheduling a visit to our beautiful island. We definitely look forward to hosting them and showing them our Hafa Adai spirit."

Meanwhile, NMIFA would

like to thank the Office of the Governor and other government agencies and officials and members of the CNMI football community for assisting the association in its preparations for Sheikh Salman's visit. (NMIFA)

AGAPE 1

From Page 28

Agape 1 wingmen Silas Xu and Jonathan Xiong were the frequent beneficiaries of Yang's unselfish plays. Xu chipped in 22 points, while Xiong also finished in double digits with his 14 points. Xu left his mark in the third quarter, scoring eight in that frame, including two three pointers to demoralize the hapless Eagles.

Besides the trio of Yang, Xu, and Xiong, the Torchbearers also got contributions from starting center Mark Shao and Peter Wang. The big man mustered 8 points in the paint, while Wang added 7.

Agape's balance offense was complemented by its full-court press defense that smothered the Eagles in the first two quarters. The Torchbearers managed to steal the ball several times and made fastbreak conversions off their multiple defensive stops to end the first half with a commanding 51-14 lead.

Agape was never threatened after that to improve to a 2-1 record for a share of second place in the team standings with Kagman High School and Mt. Carmel School 1. The Eagles, who drew 13 points from center Ryan Choi and 11 from captain Marcky Masilungan, dropped to a 1-2 slate.

Meanwhile, after suffering a close loss against the leading



Agape Christian School and Grace Christian Academy players battle for the first possession in their game in the CCOPSA caging last Friday at the GCA court in Navy Hill.

Saipan Southern High School (2-0) last Wednesday, the Ayuyus bounced back and defeated MCS 1 in front of their home crowd in Kagman, 57-47.

The Knights won their first two games of the season in convincing fashion, scoring a combined 163 points, but Kagman's defense effectively halted MCS 1's momentum.

Meanwhile, the Saipan International School-Saipan Southern High School game

last weekend at the SIS court was postponed due to rain, while the lone girls match last Friday had GCA winning its season debut against Agape, 26-16.

Lady Eagles captain and starting combo guard Jasmine Phan led GCA with her 12 points, half of them came from the stripe. Tina Choi and Anna Nunez added 6 and 4 markers, respectively, as they teamed up in dominating the paint for GCA.

After the victory over Agape, the Lady Eagles will gun for win No. 2 this Thursday when they take on defending champions Lady Knights.

In the boys division games today, Agape will be hosting a double-header in their court in Gualo Rai with Agape 1 taking on Kagman at 3:30pm and Agape 2 facing SSHS at 4:30pm. Over in Navy Hill, GCA will be battling MCS 2, while MCS 1 will challenge host SIS.



Scherzer: Pitch clock messes with 'fabric' of baseball

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Pelicans stunt
Lakers' playoff
push without Davis

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28 MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2019

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tan, Schorr treasure award

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

ATHLETES of the YEAR Tania Tan and Robbie Schorr have received recognitions before, but winning the 2018 Northern Marianas Sports Association/Tan Siu Lin Foundation Student Athlete of the Year award last week was more special.

"Winning the Female Student Athlete of the Year award made me feel accomplished. I've won Athlete of the Month a couple of times, but never the Athlete of the Year, so I am very thankful to finally be able to receive this award in my senior year," said Tan, adding that getting

her hands on the coveted trophy made her think about the time she devoted to training last season.

"I trained practically everyday last year (even during the summer because I had to prepare for the Australian Cross Country Championships in August), so I feel like

See TAN on Page 27

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Tania Tan, left, and Robbie Schorr pose with their trophies and in-kind prizes after getting the Northern Marianas Sports Association/Tan Siu Lin Foundation 2018 Student Athlete of the Year award during the NMSA/TSL Foundation Annual Sports Banquet at the Hibiscus Hall of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan last Wednesday.



Agape 1 cruises past GCA

By ROBY N. PAMINTUAN
pamintuanrob@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Agape Christian School 1 blazed its way to an 88-35 victory over Grace Christian Academy in the boys division game in the 2018-2019 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Association Varsity Basketball League last Friday at the Eagles court in Navy Hill.

Agape 1 captain Kobe Yang torched GCA with his game-high 28 points. The Torch-bearers starting point guard flashed his offensive arsenal

by scoring on fastbreak layups, hitting mid-range jumpers, and swishing home three 3-point baskets. Yang's maturity as a floor general was also

in full display, as he got his teammates involved in their offensive sets.

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Sheikh Salman's Saipan visit postponed



The Saipan visit of Asian Football Confederation president, His Excellency, Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa has been postponed due to Super Typhoon Wutip.



Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan said he received a phone call from Sheikh Salman last Saturday, informing NMFIA that the AFC delegation

won't make it to the island this afternoon because of Wutip—which was upgraded to a category 5 super typhoon and brought heavy rains and flooding in Guam over the weekend. The typhoon, though did not hit Saipan directly, had the island placed under tropical storm watch since last Thursday and its size and scope are so big that it has brought strong winds

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Agape Christian School 1's Peter Wang, left, unloads a shot in front of the defense of Grace Christian Academy's Ryan Choi during their game in the CCOPSA caging last Friday at the GCA court in Navy Hill. ROBY N. PAMINTUAN